



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>





270 f. 1332

P. Ottaway

GUY FAWKES ;

OR,

THE GUNPOWDER TREASON.

An Historical Romance.

BY

W. HARRISON AINSWORTH, ESQ.

You shall swear by the blessed Trinity, and by the sacrament you now propose to receive, never to disclose, directly or indirectly, by word or circumstance, the matter that shall be proposed to you to keep secret ; nor desist from the execution thereof till the rest shall give you leave.

OATH OF THE CONSPIRATORS.

COMPLETE IN ONE VOLUME.

TWELFTH THOUSAND.

LONDON:
CHAPMAN AND HALL, 193, PICCADILLY
(LATE 186, STRAND).
MDCCL.



WHITING, BEAUFORT HOUSE, STRAND.

TO

MRS. HUGHES,
KINGSTON LISLE, BERKS.

MY DEAR MRS. HUGHES,

You are aware that this Romance was brought to a close during my last brief visit at Kingston Lisle, when the time necessarily devoted to it deprived me of the full enjoyment of your society, and, limiting my range—no very irksome restriction—to your own charming garden and grounds, prevented me from accompanying you in your walks to your favourite and beautiful downs. This circumstance, which will suffice to give it some interest in your eyes by associating it with your residence, furnishes me with a plea, of which I gladly avail myself, of inscribing it with your name, and of recording, at the same time, the high sense I entertain of your goodness and worth, the value I set upon your friendship,—a friendship shared in common with some of the most illustrious writers of our time,—and the gratitude I shall never cease to feel for attentions and kindnesses little less than maternal, which I have experienced at your hands.

In the hope that you may long continue to diffuse happiness round your own circle, and contribute to the instruction and delight of the many attached friends with whom you maintain so active and so interesting a correspondence; and that you may live to see your grandsons fulfil their present promise, and tread in the footsteps of their high-minded and excellent-hearted father,—and of *his* father! I remain,

Your affectionate and obliged friend,
W. HARRISON AINSWORTH.

KENSAL MANOR HOUSE, HARROW-ROAD,
July 26, 1841.



penalties of recusancy; he had merely forbidden them to be exacted for a time, in the hope that this indulgence would lead to conformity; but his expectations had been deceived; the obstinacy of the Catholics had grown with the lenity of the sovereign; and, as they were unworthy of further favour, they should now be left to the severity of the law. To their dismay, the legal fine of twenty pounds per lunar month was again demanded, and not only for the time to come, but for the whole period of the suspension; a demand which, by crowding thirteen payments into one, reduced many families of moderate incomes to a state of absolute beggary. Nor was this all. James was surrounded by numbers of his indigent countrymen. Their habits were expensive, their wants many, and their importunities incessant. To satisfy the more clamorous, a new expedient was devised. The king transferred to them his claims on some of the more opulent recusants, against whom they were at liberty to proceed by law, in his name, unless the sufferers should submit to compound by the grant of an annuity for life, or the immediate payment of a considerable sum. This was at a time when the jealousies between the two nations had reached a height, of which, at the present day, we have but little conception. Had the money been carried to the royal coffers, the recusants would have had sufficient reason to complain; but that Englishmen should be placed by their king at the mercy of foreigners, that they should be stripped of their property to support the extravagance of his Scottish minions, this added indignity to injustice, exacerbated their already wounded feelings, and goaded the most moderate almost to desperation."

From this deplorable state of things, which is by no means over-coloured in the above description, sprang the Gunpowder Plot.

270 f. 1332

GUY FAWKES.

Book I.—The Plot.

CHAPTER I.—AN EXECUTION IN MANCHESTER AT THE BEGINNING OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

MORE than two hundred and thirty-five years ago, or, to speak with greater precision, in 1605, at the latter end of June, it was rumoured one morning in Manchester that two seminary priests, condemned at the late assizes, under the severe penal enactments then in force against the Papists, were about to suffer death on that day. Attracted by the report, large crowds flocked towards the place of execution, which, in order to give greater solemnity to the spectacle, had been fixed at the southern gate of the old collegiate church (now the cathedral), where a scaffold was erected. Near it stood a large, blood-stained block, the use of which will be readily divined; and adjoining the block, upon a heap of blazing coals, smoked a caldron, filled with boiling pitch, intended to receive the quarters of the miserable sufferers.

The place was guarded by a small band of soldiers, fully accoutred in corslets and morions, and armed with swords, half-pikes, and calivers. Upon the steps of the scaffold stood the executioner, a square-built, ill-favoured personage, busied in arranging a bundle of straw upon the boards. He was dressed in a buff jerkin, and had a long-bladed, two-edged knife thrust into his girdle. Besides these persons there was a pursuivant, an officer appointed by the privy council to make search throughout the province for recusants, Popish priests, and other religious offenders. The pursuivant was occupied at this moment in reading over a list of suspected persons.

Neither the executioner nor his companions appeared in the slightest degree impressed by the butcherly business about to be enacted; for the former whistled carelessly as he pursued his task, while the latter laughed and chatted with the crowd, or jestingly pointed their matchlocks at the jackdaws wheeling above them in the sunny air, or perching upon the pinnacles and tower of the neighbouring church. Not the majority of the assemblage. Most of the older and wealthy families in Lancashire still continuing to adhere to the ancient faith

their fathers, it will not be wondered that many of their dependents should follow their example. And, even of those who were adverse to the creed of Rome, there were few who did not murmur at the rigorous system of persecution adopted towards its professors.

At nine o'clock, the hollow rolling of a muffled drum was heard at a distance. The deep bell of the church began to toll, and presently after a mournful procession was seen advancing from the market-place. It consisted of a troop of mounted soldiers, equipped in all respects like those stationed at the scaffold, with their captain at their head, and followed by two of their number with hurdles attached to their steeds, on which were tied the unfortunate victims. Both were young men—both apparently prepared to meet their fate with firmness and resignation. They had been brought from Radcliffe Hall, an old moated and fortified mansion, situated where the close called Pool Fold now stands, and then recently converted into a place of security for recusants, the two other prisons in Manchester—namely, the New Fleet on Hunt's Bank, and the Gaol on Salford Bridge—not being found adequate to the accommodation of the numerous religious offenders.

By this time the cavalcade had reached the place of execution. The soldiers drove back the throng with their pikes, and cleared a space in front of the scaffold, when, just as the cords that bound the limbs of the priests were unfastened, a woman in a tattered woollen robe, with a hood partially drawn over her face—the features of which, so far as they could be discerned, were sharp and attenuated—a rope girded round her waist, bare feet, and having altogether the appearance of a Sister of Charity, sprang forward, and flung herself on her knees beside them.

Clasping the hem of the garment of the nearest priest, she pressed it to her lips, and gazed earnestly at him, as if imploring a blessing.

"You have your wish, daughter," said the priest, extending his arms over her. "Heaven and Our Lady bless you!"

The woman then turned towards the other victim, who was audibly reciting the *Miserere*.

"Back, spawn of Antichrist!" interposed a soldier, rudely thrusting her aside. "Don't you see you disturb the father's devotions? He has enough to do to take care of his own soul, without minding yours."

"Take this, daughter," cried the priest who had been first addressed, offering her a small volume which he took from his vest, "and fail not to remember in your prayers the sinful soul of Robert Woodroffe, a brother of the order of Jesus."

The woman put out her hand to take the book; but before it could be delivered to her, it was seized by the soldier.

"Your priests have seldom anything to leave behind them," he shouted, with a brutal laugh, "except some worthless and superstitious relic of a saint or martyr. What's this? Ah! a breviary—a mass-book! I've too much regard for your spiritual welfare to allow you to receive it," he added, about to place it in his doublet.

"Give it her," exclaimed a young man, snatching it from him, and handing it to the woman, who disappeared as soon as she had obtained possession of it.

The soldier eyed the new comer as if disposed to resent the inter-

ference, but a glance at his apparel, which, though plain and of a sober hue, was rather above the middle class—as well as a murmur from the crowd, who were evidently disposed to take part with the young man, induced him to stay his hand. He therefore contented himself with crying, “A recusant! a Papist!”

“I am neither recusant nor Papist, knave!” replied the other, sternly, “and I counsel you to amend your manners, and show more humanity, or you shall find I have interest enough to procure your dismissal from a service which you disgrace.”

This reply elicited a shout of applause from the mob.

“Who is that bold speaker,” demanded the pursuivant from one of his attendants.

“Humphrey Chetham, of Crumpsall,” answered the man, “son to one of the wealthiest merchants of the town, and a zealous upholder of the true faith.”

“He has a strange way of showing his zeal,” rejoined the pursuivant, entering the answer in his note-book. “And who is the woman he befriended?”

“A half-crazed being called Elizabeth Orton,” replied the attendant. “She was scourged and tortured during Queen Elizabeth’s reign for pretending to the gift of prophecy, and was compelled to utter her recantation within yonder church. Since then she has never opened her lips.”

“Indeed!” exclaimed the pursuivant: “I will engage to make her speak, and to some purpose. Where does she live?”

“In a cave on the banks of the Irwell, near Ordsall Hall,” replied the attendant. “She subsists on the chance contributions of the charitable; but she solicits nothing,—and, indeed, is seldom seen.”

“Her cave must be searched,” observed the pursuivant; “it may be the hiding-place of a priest. Father Campion was concealed in such another spot at Stonor Park, near Henley-on-Thames, where he composed his ‘*Decem Rationes* ;’ and, for a long time, eluded the vigilance of the commissioners. We shall pass it in our way to Ordsall Hall to-night, shall we not?”

The attendant nodded an affirmative.

“If we surprise Father Oldcorne,” continued the pursuivant, “and can prove that Sir William Radcliffe and his daughter, both of whom are denounced in my list, are harbourers and shelterers of recusants, we shall have done a good night’s work.”

At this moment an officer advanced, and commanded the priests to ascend the scaffold.

As Father Woodroffe, who was the last to mount, reached the uppermost step, he turned round, and cried in a loud voice, “Good people, I take you all to witness that I die in the true Catholic religion, and that I rejoice and thank God, with all my soul, that He hath made me worthy to testify my faith therein, by shedding my blood in this manner.” He then advanced towards the executioner, who was busied in adjusting the cord round his companion’s throat, and said, “God forgive thee—do thine office quickly;” adding, in a lower tone, “*Asperge me, Domine ; Domine, miserere mei !*”

And, amid the deep silence that ensued, the executioner performed his horrible task.

The execution over, the crowd began to separate slowly, and various opinions were expressed respecting the revolting and sanguinary spectacle just witnessed. Many who condemned—and the majority did so—the extreme severity of the laws by which the unfortunate priests had just suffered, uttered their sentiments with extreme caution; but there were some whose feelings had been too much excited for prudence, and who inveighed loudly and bitterly against the spirit of religious persecution then prevailing; while a few others of an entirely opposite persuasion looked upon the rigorous proceedings adopted against the Papists, and the punishment now inflicted upon their priesthood, as a just retribution for their own severities during the reign of Mary. In general, the common people entertained a strong prejudice against the Catholic party,—for, as it has been shrewdly observed, “they must ever have some object to hate; heretofore it was the Welsh, the Scots, or the Spaniards, but now in these latter times, only the Papists;” but in Manchester, near which, as has already been stated, so many old and important families professing that religion resided, the case was widely different; and the mass of the inhabitants were favourably inclined towards them. It was the knowledge of this feeling that induced the commissioners, appointed to superintend the execution of the enactments against recusants, to proceed with unusual rigour in this neighbourhood.

The state of the Roman Catholic party at the period of this history was indeed most grievous. The hopes indulged by them of greater toleration on the accession of James I. had been entirely destroyed. The persecutions, suspended during the first year of the reign of the new monarch, were now renewed with greater severity than ever; and though their present condition was deplorable enough, it was feared that worse remained in store. “They bethought themselves,” writes Bishop Goodman, “that now their case was far worse than in the time of Queen Elizabeth; for they did live in some hope that after the old woman’s life they might have some mitigation; and even those who did then persecute them were a little more moderate, as being doubtful what times might succeed, and fearing their own case. But now that they saw the times settled, having no hope of better days, but expecting that the uttermost rigour of the law should be executed, they became desperate: finding that by the laws of the kingdom their own lives were not secured, and for the carrying over of a priest into England it was no less than high treason. A gentlewoman was hanged only for relieving and harbouring a priest; a citizen was hanged only for being reconciled to the Church of Rome; besides, the penal laws were such, and so executed, that they could not subsist. What was usually sold in shops and usually bought, this the pursuivant would take away from them as being Popish and superstitious. One knight did affirm that in one term he gave twenty nobles in rewards to the door-keeper of the attorney-general; another did affirm, that his third part which remained unto him of his estate, did hardly serve for his expense in law to defend him from other oppressions; besides, their children to be taken from home, to be brought up in another religion. So they *did every way conclude that their estate was desperate; they could die but once, and their religion was more precious unto them than their lives.* They did further consider their misery; how they were de-

barred in any course of life to help themselves. They could not practise law,—they could not be citizens,—they could have no office; they could not breed up their sons—none did desire to match with them; they had neither fit marriages for their daughters, nor nunneries to put them into; for those few which are beyond seas are not considerable in respect of the number of recusants, and none can be admitted into them without great sums of money, which they, being exhausted, could not supply. The Spiritual Court did not cease to molest them, to excommunicate them, then to imprison them; and thereby they were utterly disenabled to sue for their own." Such is a faithful picture of the state of the Catholic party at the commencement of the reign of James I.

Pressed down by these intolerable grievances, is it to be wondered at that the Papists should repine,—or that some among their number, when all other means failed, should seek redress by darker measures? By a statute of Elizabeth, all who refused to conform to the established religion were subjected to a fine of 20*l.* a lunar month; and this heavy penalty, remitted, or rather suspended, on the accession of the new sovereign, was again exacted, and all arrears claimed. Added to this, James, whose court was thronged by a host of needy Scottish retainers, assigned to them a certain number of wealthy recusants, and empowered them to levy the fines,—a privilege of which they were not slow to avail themselves. There were other pains and penalties provided for by the same statute, which were rigorously inflicted. To withdraw, or seek to withdraw another from the established religion, was accounted high treason, and punished accordingly; to hear mass involved a penalty of 100 marks and a year's imprisonment; and to harbour a priest, under the denomination of a tutor, rendered the latter liable to a year's imprisonment, and his employer to a fine of 10*l.* a month. Impressed with the belief that, in consequence of the unremitting persecutions which the Catholics underwent in Elizabeth's time, the religion would be wholly extirpated, Doctor Allen, a Lancashire divine, who afterwards received a cardinal's hat, founded a college at Douay, for the reception and education of those intending to take orders. From this university a number of missionary priests, or seminarists, as they were termed, were annually sent over to England; and it was against these persons, who submitted to every hardship and privation, to danger and death itself, for the welfare of their religion, and in the hope of propagating its doctrines, that the utmost rigour of the penal enactments was directed. Among the number of seminarists despatched from Douay, and capitally convicted under the statute above mentioned, were the two priests whose execution has just been narrated.

As a portion of the crowd passed over the old bridge across the Irwell connecting Manchester with Salford, on which stood an ancient chapel erected by Thomas de Booth in the reign of Edward III., and recently converted into a prison for recusants, they perceived the prophetess, Elizabeth Orton, seated upon the stone steps of the desecrated structure, earnestly perusing the missal given her by Father Woodroffe. *A mob speedily collected round her; but, unconscious seemingly of their presence, the poor woman turned over leaf after leaf, and pursued her studies. Her hood was thrown back, and discovered her bare and withered neck, over which her dishevelled hair streamed i*

long sable elf-locks. Irritated by her indifference, several of the bystanders, who had questioned her as to the nature of her studies, began to mock and flout her, and endeavoured, by plucking her robe, and casting little pebbles at her, to attract her attention. Roused at length by these annoyances, she arose; and fixing her large black eyes menacingly upon them, was about to stalk away, when they surrounded and detained her.

"Speak to us, Bess," cried several voices. "Prophecy—prophecy."

"I *will* speak to you," replied the poor woman, shaking her hand at them; I *will* prophecy to you. And mark me, though ye believe me not, my words shall not fall to the ground."

"A miracle! a miracle!" shouted the bystanders. "Bess Orton, who has been silent for twenty years, has found her tongue at last."

"I have seen a vision, and dreamed a dream," continued the prophetess. "As I lay in my cell last night, meditating upon the forlorn state of our religion, and of its professors, methought nineteen shadowy figures stood before me—ay, nineteen—for I counted them thrice; and when I questioned them as to their coming,—for my tongue at first clove to the roof of my mouth, and my lips refused their office,—one of them answered in a voice which yet rings in my ears, 'We are the chosen deliverers of our fallen and persecuted church. To us is entrusted the rebuilding of her temples,—to our hands is committed the destruction of her enemies. The work will be done in darkness and in secret,—with toil and travail, but it will at length be made manifest; and when the hour is arrived, our vengeance will be terrible and exterminating.' With these words they vanished from my sight. Ah!" she exclaimed, suddenly starting, and passing her hand across her brow, as if to clear her sight, "it was no dream—no vision. I see one of them now."

"Where? where?" cried several voices.

The prophetess answered by extending her skinny arm towards some object immediately before her.

All eyes were instantly turned in the same direction, when they beheld a Spanish soldier—for such his garb proclaimed him—standing at a few paces' distance from them. He was wrapped in an ample cloak, with a broad-leafed, steeple-crowned hat, decorated with a single green feather, pulled over his brows; and wore a polished-steel brigandine, trunk hose, and buff boots drawn up to the knees. His arms consisted of a brace of petronels thrust into his belt, whence a long rapier depended. His features were dark as bronze, and well formed though strongly marked, and had an expression of settled sternness. His eyes were black and penetrating, and shaded by thick beetle-brows; and his physiognomy was completed by a black peaked beard. His person was tall and erect, and his deportment soldier-like and commanding. Perceiving he had become an object of notice, the stranger cast a compassionate look at the prophetess, who still remained gazing fixedly at him, and, throwing her a few pieces of money, strode away.

Watching his retreating figure till it disappeared from view, the *crazed* woman tossed her arms wildly in the air, and cried, in a voice of *exultation*, "*Did I not speak the truth?—did I not tell you I had seen him? He is the deliverer of our church, and is come to avenge the righteous blood which hath been this day shed.*"

"Peace, woman, and fly while there is yet time," cried the young man who had been designated as Humphrey Chetham. "The pursuivant and his myrmidons are in search of you."

"Then they need not go far to find me," replied the prophetess. "I will tell them what I told these people—that the day of bloody retribution is at hand,—that the avenger is arrived. I have seen him twice,—once in my cave, and once again here,—even where you stand."

"If you do not keep silence and fly, poor creature," rejoined Humphrey Chetham, "you will have to endure what you suffered years ago—stripes, and perhaps torture. Be warned by me. Ah! it is too late! He is approaching."

"Let him come," replied Elizabeth Orton; "I am ready for him."

"Can none of you force her away?" cried Humphrey Chetham, appealing to the crowd; "I will reward you."

"I will not stir from this spot," rejoined the prophetess, obstinately; "I will testify to the truth."

The kind-hearted young merchant, finding any further attempt to preserve her fruitless, drew aside.

By this time the pursuivant and his attendants had come up. "Soize her!" cried the former, "and let her be placed within this prison till I have reported her to the commissioners. If you will confess to me, woman," he added in a whisper to her, "that you have harboured a priest, and will guide us to his hiding-place, you shall be set free."

"I know of no priests but those you have murdered," returned the prophetess, in a loud voice, "but I will tell you something that you wot not of. The avenger of blood is at hand. I have seen him. All here have seen him. And you shall see him—but not now—not now."

"What is the meaning of this raving?" demanded the pursuivant.

"Pay no heed to her talk," interposed Humphrey Chetham; "she is a poor crazed being, who knows not what she says. I will be surety for her inoffensive conduct."

"You must give me surety for yourself, sir," replied the pursuivant. "I have just learnt that you were last night at Ordsall Hall, the seat of that 'dangerous temporiser,'—for so he is designated in my warrant,—Sir William Radcliffe. And if report speaks truly, you are not altogether insensible to the charms of his fair daughter, Viviana."

"What is this to thee, thou malapert knave?" cried Humphrey Chetham, reddening partly from anger, partly, it might be, from another emotion.

"Much, as you shall presently find, good Master Wolf-in-sheep's-clothing," retorted the pursuivant; "if you prove not a rank Papist at heart, then I do not know a true man from a false."

This angry conference was cut short by a piercing scream from the prophetess. Breaking from the grasp of her captors, who were about to force her into the prison, she sprang with a single bound upon the parapet of the bridge; and, utterly regardless of her dangerous position, turned and faced the soldiers, who were struck mute with astonishment.

"Tremble!" she cried, in a loud voice,—"*tremble, ye evil-doers! ye who have despoiled the house of God,—have broken His altars,—scattered His incense,—slain His priests. Tremble, I say! The avenger is arrived. The bolt is in his hand. It shall strike king, lords, commons—all! These are my last words—take them to heart.*"

"Drag her off!" roared the pursuivant, furiously.

"Use care—use gentleness, if ye are men!" cried Humphrey Chetham.

"Think not to detain me!" cried the prophetess. "Avaunt, and tremble!"

And she flung herself from the parapet.

The height from which she fell was about fifty feet. Dashed into the air like jets from a fountain, by the weight and force of the descending body, the water instantly closed over it. But she rose to the surface of the stream about twenty yards below the bridge.

"She may yet be saved," cried Humphrey Chetham, who with the bystanders had hurried to the side of the bridge.

"You will only preserve her for the gallows," observed the pursuivant.

"Your malice shall not prevent my making the attempt," replied the young merchant. "Ha! assistance is at hand."

The exclamation was occasioned by the sudden appearance of the soldier in the Spanish dress, who rushed towards the left bank of the river, which was here, as elsewhere, formed of red sandstone rock, and following the course of the current, awaited the next appearance of the drowning woman. It did not occur till she had been carried a considerable distance down the stream, when the soldier, swiftly divesting himself of his cloak, plunged into the water and dragged her ashore.

"Follow me," cried the pursuivant to his attendants. "I will not lose my prey."

But before he gained the bank of the river, the soldier and his charge had disappeared, nor could he detect any traces of them.

CHAPTER II.—ORDSALL CAVE.

AFTER rescuing the unfortunate prophetess from a watery grave in the manner just related, the soldier snatched up his cloak, and, taking his dripping burden in his arms, hurried swiftly along the bank of the river, until he came to a large cleft in the rock, into which he crept, taking the prophetess with him, and thus eluded observation. In this retreat he continued upwards of two hours, during which time the poor creature, to whom he paid every attention that circumstances would admit, had so far recovered as to be able to speak. But it was evident that the shock had been too much for her, and that she was sinking fast. She was so faint that she could scarcely move; but she expressed a strong desire to reach her cell before she breathed her last. Having described its situation as accurately as she could to the soldier—who, before he ventured forth, looked out to reconnoitre—he again raised her in his arms, and by her directions struck into a narrow lane skirting the bank of the river.

Pursuing this road for about half a mile, he arrived at the foot of a small knoll, covered by a clump of magnificent beech-trees; and still acting under the guidance of the dying woman, whose voice grew more feeble each instant, he mounted it, and from its summit took a rapid survey of the surrounding country. On the opposite bank of the river

stood an old hall, while further on, at some distance, he could perceive through the trees the gables and chimneys of another ancient mansion.

"Raise me up," said Elizabeth Orton, as he lingered on this spot for a moment. "In that old house which you see yonder, Hulme Hall, I was born. I would willingly take one look at it before I die."

"And the other mansion which I discern through the trees is Ordsall Hall, is it not?" inquired the soldier.

"It is," replied the prophetess. "And now let us make what haste we can. We have not far to go; and I feel I shall not last long."

Descending the eminence, and again entering the lane, which here made a turn, the soldier approached a grassy space, walled in on either side by steep sandstone rocks. At the further extremity of the enclosure, after a moment's search, by the direction of his companion, he discovered, artfully concealed by overhanging brushwood, the mouth of a small cave. He crept into the excavation, and found it about six feet high, and of considerable depth. The roof was ornamented with Runic characters and other grotesque and half-effaced inscriptions, while the sides were embellished with Gothic tracery, amid which the letters L.H.S., carved in ancient church text, could be easily distinguished. Tradition assigned the cell to the priests of Odin, but it was evident that worshippers at other and holier altars had more recently made it their retreat. Its present occupant had furnished it with a straw pallet and a small wooden crucifix fixed in a recess in the wall. Gently depositing her upon the pallet, the soldier took a seat beside her on a stone slab at the foot of the bed. He next, at her request, as the cave was rendered almost wholly dark by the overhanging trees, struck a light, and set fire to a candle placed within a lantern.

After a few moments passed in prayer, the recluse begged him to give her the crucifix, that she might clasp it to her breast. This done, she became more composed, and prepared to meet her end. Suddenly, as if something had again disturbed her, she opened wide her glazing eyes, and starting up with a dying effort, stretched out her hands.

"I see him before them!" she cried. "They examine him—they adjudge him! Ah! he is now in a dungeon! See, the torturers advance! He is placed on the rack—once—twice—thrice—they turn the levers! His joints snap in their sockets—his sinews crack! Mercy! He is led to execution. I see him ascend the scaffold!"

"Whom do you behold?" inquired the soldier, listening to her in astonishment.

"His face is hidden from me," replied the prophetess; but his figure is not unlike your own. Ha! I hear the executioner pronounce his name. How are you called?"

"GUY FAWKES," replied the soldier.

"It is the name I heard," rejoined Elizabeth Orton.

And, sinking backward, she expired.

Guy Fawkes gazed at her for some time, till he felt assured that the last spark of life had fled. He then turned away, and became lost in deep reflection.

CHAPTER III.—ORDSALL HALL.

SOON after sunset on the evening of the events previously related, the inmates of Ordsall Hall were disturbed and alarmed (for in those times of trouble any casual disturbance at night was sufficient to occasion alarm to a Catholic family) by a loud clamour for admittance from some one stationed at the further side of the moat, then, as now, surrounding that ancient manorial residence. The drawbridge being raised, no apprehension was entertained of an attempt at forcible entrance on the part of the intruder, who, so far as he could be discerned in the deepening twilight, rendered yet more obscure by the shade of the trees under which he stood, appeared to be a solitary horseman. Still, for fear of a surprise, it was judged prudent by those inside the hall to turn a deaf ear to the summons; nor was it until it had been more than once repeated in a peremptory tone that any attention was paid to it. The outer gate was then cautiously opened by an old steward, and a couple of serving-men, armed with pikes and swords, who demanded the stranger's business, and were answered that he desired to speak with Sir William Radcliffe. The steward rejoined that his master was not at home, having set out the day before for Chester; but that even if he were, he would take upon himself to affirm that no audience would be given, on any pretence whatever, to a stranger at such an unseasonable hour. To this the other replied, in a haughty and commanding voice, that he was neither a stranger to Sir William Radcliffe, nor ignorant of the necessity of caution, though in this instance it was altogether superfluous; and as, notwithstanding the steward's assertion to the contrary, he was fully persuaded his master *was* at home, he insisted upon being conducted to him without further parley, as his business would not brook delay. In vain the steward declared he had spoken the truth: the stranger evidently disbelieved him; but, as he could obtain no more satisfactory answer to his interrogations, he suddenly shifted his ground, and inquired whether Sir William's daughter, Mistress Viviana, was likewise absent from home.

"Before I reply to the question, I must know by whom and wherefore it is put?" returned the steward, evasively.

"Trouble not yourself further, friend, but deliver this letter to her," rejoined the horseman, flinging a packet across the moat. "It is addressed to her father, but there is no reason why she should not be acquainted with its contents."

"Take it up, Olin Birtwissel," cried the steward, eyeing the packet which had fallen at his feet suspiciously,—*"take it up, I say, and hold it to the light, that I may consider it well before I carry it to our young mistress. I have heard of strange treacheries practised by such means, and care not to meddle with it."*

"Neither do I, good Master Heydocke," replied Birtwissel. "I would not touch it for a twelvemonth's wages. It may burst, and *spoil my good looks*, and so ruin my fortunes with the damsels. But *here is Jeff Gellibronde*, who, having no beauty to lose, and being, *moreover, afraid of nothing*, will pick it up for you."

"*Speak for yourself*, Olin," rejoined Gellibronde, in a surly tone.

"I have no more fancy for a shattered limb, or a scorched face, than my neighbours."

"Dolts!" cried the stranger, who had listened to these observations with angry impatience, "if you will not convey my packet, which has nothing more dangerous about it than an ordinary letter, to your mistress, at least acquaint her that Mr. Robert Catesby, of Ashby St. Legers, is without, and craves an instant speech with her."

"Mr. Catesby!" exclaimed the steward, in astonishment. "If it be indeed your worship, why did you not declare yourself at once?"

"I may have as good reason for caution as yourself, Master Heydocke," returned Catesby, laughing.

"True," rejoined the steward; "but, methinks, it is somewhat strange to find your worship here, when I am aware that my master expected to meet you, and certain other honourable gentlemen that you wot of, at a place in a clean opposite direction, Holywell, in Flintshire."

"The cause of my presence, since you desire to be certified of the matter, is simply this," replied Catesby, urging his steed towards the edge of the moat, while the steward advanced to meet him on the opposite bank, so that a few yards only lay between them: "I came round by Manchester," he continued in a lower tone, "to see if any assistance could be rendered to the unfortunate Fathers Woodroffe and Forshawe; but found on my arrival this morning that I was too late, as they had just been executed."

"Heaven have mercy on their souls!" ejaculated Heydocke, shuddering, and crossing himself. "Yours was a pious mission, Master Catesby. Would it had been availing!"

"I would so too, with all my soul!" rejoined the other, fervently; "but fate ordained it otherwise. While I was in the town, I accidentally learnt from one, who informed me he had just parted with him, that your master was at home; and, fearing he might not be able to attend the meeting at Holywell, I resolved to proceed hither at nightfall, when my visit was not likely to be observed; having motives, which you may readily conjecture, for preserving the strictest secrecy on the occasion. The letter was prepared in case I should fail in meeting with him. And now that I have satisfied your scruples, good master steward, if Sir William be really within, I pray you lead me to him forthwith. If not, your young mistress must serve my turn, for I have that to say which it imports one or other of them to know."

"In regard to my master," replied the steward, "he departed yesterday for Chester, on his way to join the pilgrimage to St. Winifred's Well, as I have already assured your worship. And whoever informed you to the contrary, spoke falsely. But I will convey your letter and message to my young mistress, and on learning her pleasure as to receiving you, will instantly return and report it. These are dangerous times, your worship,—dangerous times. A good Catholic knows not whom to trust, there are so many spoilers abroad."

"How, sirrah!" cried Catesby, angrily; "do you apply that observation to me?"

"Far be it from me," answered Heydocke, respectfully, "to apply any observation that may sound offensive to your worship, whom I know to be a most worthy gentleman, and as free from heresy as air

in the kingdom. I was merely endeavouring to account for what may appear my over-caution in detaining you where you are till I learn my lady's pleasure. It is a rule in this house not to lower the drawbridge without orders after sunset; and I dare not, for my place, disobey it. Young Master Humphrey Chetham, of Crumpsall, was detained in the like manner no later than last night; and he is a visitor," he added, in a significant tone, "who is not altogether unwelcome to my mistress—ahem! But duty is no respecter of persons; and in my master's absence my duty is to protect his household. Your worship will pardon me."

"I will pardon anything but your loquacity and tediousness," rejoined Catesby, impatiently. "About your errand quickly."

"I am gone, your worship," returned the steward, disappearing with his companions.

Throwing the bridle over his horse's neck, and allowing him to drink his fill from the water of the moat, and afterwards to pluck a few mouthfuls of the long grass fringing its brink, Catesby abandoned himself to reflection. In a few moments, as the steward did not return, he raised his eyes, and fixed them upon the ancient habitation before him:—ancient, indeed, it was not at this time, having been in a great measure rebuilt by its possessor, Sir William Radcliffe, during the latter part of the reign of Elizabeth, in the rich and picturesque style of that period. Little could be distinguished of its projecting and retiring wings, its walls decorated with black-and-white chequer-work, the characteristic of the class of architecture to which it belonged, or of its magnificent embayed windows filled with stained glass; but the outline of its heavy roof, with its numerous gables, and groups of tall and elaborately-ornamented chimneys, might be distinctly traced in strong relief against the warm and still-glowing western sky.

Though gone to decay, grievously neglected, and divided into three separate dwelling-houses, Ordsall Hall still retains much of its original character and beauty; and viewed at the magic hour above described, when the changes produced by the lapse of years cannot be detected, it presents much the same striking appearance that it offered to the gaze of Catesby. Situated on the north bank of the Irwell, which supplies the moat with a constant stream of fresh water, it commands on the south-west a beautiful view of the winding course of the river, here almost forming an island, of Trafford Park and its hall, of the woody uplands beyond it, and of the distant hills of Cheshire. The mansion itself is an irregular quadrangle, covering a considerable tract of ground. The gardens, once exquisitely laid out in the formal taste of Elizabeth's days, are also enclosed by the moat, surrounding (except at intervals) a space of some acres in extent. At the period of this history, it was approached on the north-east by a noble avenue of sycamores, leading to within a short distance of its gates.

As Catesby surveyed this stately structure, and pondered upon the wealth and power of its owner, his meditations thus found vent in words:—"If I could but link Radcliffe to our cause, or win the hand of his fair daughter, and so bind him to me, the great attempt could not fail. *She has refused me once. No matter: I will persevere till she yields.* With Father Oldcorne to back my suit, I am assured of success. *She is necessary to my purpose, and shall be mine.*"

Descended from an ancient Northamptonshire family, and numbering among his ancestry the well-known minister of the same name, who flourished in the reign of Richard the Third, Robert Catesby—at this time about forty—had in his youth led a wild and dissolute life; and though bred in the faith of Rome, he had for some years abandoned its worship. In 1580, when the Jesuits, Campion and Persons, visited England, he was reconciled to the church he had quitted, and thenceforth became as zealous a supporter and promoter of its doctrines as he had heretofore been their bitter opponent. He was now actively engaged in all the Popish plots of the period, and was even supposed to be connected with those designs of a darker dye which were set on foot for Elizabeth's destruction,—with Somerville's conspiracy,—with that of Arden and Throckmorton, the latter of whom was his uncle on the maternal side,—with the plots of Bury and Savage,—of Ballard,—and of Babington. After the execution of the unfortunate Queen of Scots, he devoted himself to what was termed the Spanish faction, and endeavoured to carry out the schemes of a party who, distrusting the vague promises of James, were anxious to secure the succession to a Catholic,—the Infanta of Spain, or the Duke of Parma. On the insurrection of the Earl of Essex, he took part with that ill-fated nobleman; and though he escaped condign punishment for the offence, he was imprisoned and heavily fined.

From this time his career ran in darker channels. "Hunger-starved for innovation," as he is finely described by Camden; imbued with the fiercest religious fanaticism; eloquent, wily, resolute; able alike to delude the powerful and intimidate the weak; he possessed all the ingredients of a conspirator. Associating with men like himself, of desperate character and broken fortunes, he was ever on the look-out for some means of retrieving his own condition, and redressing the wrongs of his church. Well informed of the actual state of James's sentiments, when, on that monarch's accession, confident hopes were entertained by the Romanists of greater toleration for their religion, Catesby was the first to point out their mistake, and to foretel the season of terrible persecution that was at hand. On this persecution he grounded his hopes—hopes never realised, for the sufferers, amid all the grievances they endured, remained constant in their fidelity to the throne—of exciting a general insurrection among the Catholics.

Disappointed in this expectation—disappointed also in his hopes of Spain, of France, and of aid from Rome, he fell back upon himself, and resolved upon the execution of a dark and dreadful project which he had long conceived, and which he could execute almost single-handed, without aid from foreign powers, and without the co-operation of his own party. The nature of this project, which, if it succeeded, would, he imagined, accomplish all or more than his wildest dreams of ambition or fanaticism had ever conceived, it will be the business of this history to develop. Without going further into detail at present, it may be mentioned that the success of the plot depended so entirely on its secrecy, and so well aware was its contriver of the extraordinary system of espionage carried on by the Earl of Salisbury and the privy council, that for some time he scarcely dared to trust it out of his own keeping. At length, after much deliberation, he communicated it to five others, all of whom were bound

to silence by an oath of unusual solemnity; and as it was necessary to the complete success of the conspiracy that its outbreak should be instantaneously followed by a rise on the part of the Catholics, he darkly hinted that a plan was on foot for their deliverance from the yoke of their oppressors, and counselled them to hold themselves in readiness to fly to arms at a moment's notice. But here again he failed. Few were disposed to listen to him; and of those who did, the majority returned for answer, "that their part was endurance, and that the only arms which Christians could use against lawful powers in their severity were prayers and tears."

Among the Popish party of that period, as in our own time, were ranked many of the oldest and most illustrious families in the kingdom,—families not less remarkable for their zeal for their religion than, as has before been observed, for their loyalty;—a loyalty afterwards approved in the disastrous reign of James the Second, by their firm adherence to what they considered the indefeasible right of inheritance. Plots, indeed, were constantly hatched throughout the reigns of Elizabeth and James by persons professing the religion of Rome; but in these the mass of the Catholics had no share. And even in seasons of the bitterest persecution, when every fresh act of treason, perpetrated by some lawless and disaffected individual, was visited with additional rigour on their heads,—when the scaffold reeked with their blood, and the stake smoked with their ashes,—when their quarters were blackening on the gates and market-crosses of every city in the realm,—when their hearths were invaded, their religion proscribed, and the very name of Papist had become a by-word,—even in those terrible seasons, as in the season under consideration, they remained constant in their fidelity to the crown.

From the troubled elements at work some fierce and turbulent spirits were sure to arise,—some gloomy fanatics who, having brooded over wrongs, real or imaginary, till they had lost all scruples of conscience, hesitated at no means of procuring redress. But it would be unjust to hold up such persons as representatives of the whole body of Catholics. Among the conspirators themselves there were redeeming shades. All were not actuated by the same atrocious motives. Mixed feelings induced Catesby to adopt the measure. Not so Guy Fawkes, who had already been leagued with the design. One idea alone ruled him. A soldier of fortune, but a stern religious enthusiast, he supposed himself chosen by Heaven for the redemption of his church, and cared not what happened to himself, provided he accomplished his (as he conceived) holy design.

In considering the causes which produced the conspiracy about to be related, and in separating the disaffected party of the Papists from the temperate, due weight must be given to the influence of the priesthood. Of the Romish clergy there were two classes—the secular priests, and the Jesuits and missionaries. While the former, like the more moderate of the laity, would have been well contented with *toleration* for their religion, the latter breathed nothing but revenge, and desired the utter subversion of the existing government,—*temporal as well as ecclesiastical*. Men, for the most part, of high intellectual powers, of untiring energy, and unconquerable fortitude, they were enabled by their zeal and ability to make many proselytes. By

their means, secret correspondence was carried on with the different courts of Europe; and they were not without hope that, taking advantage of some favourable crisis, they should yet restore their church to its former supremacy. To these persons,—who held as a maxim, "*Qui religionem Catholicam deserit regnandi jus omne amisit*,"—Catesby and his associates proved ready and devoted agents. Through their instrumentality, they hoped to accomplish the great work of their restoration. To Father Garnet, the provincial of the English Jesuits, of whom it will be necessary to speak more fully hereafter, the plot had been revealed by Catesby under the seal of confession; and though it subsequently became a question whether he was justified in withholding a secret of such importance to the state, it is sufficient for the present purpose to say that he did withhold it. For the treasonable practices of the Jesuits and their faction some palliation may perhaps be found in the unrelenting persecution to which they were subjected; but if any excuse can be admitted for them, what opinion must be formed of the conduct of their temperate brethren? Surely, while the one is condemned, admiration may be mingled with the sympathy which must be felt for the unmerited sufferings of the other!

From the foregoing statement, it will readily be inferred that Sir William Radcliffe, a devout Catholic, and a man of large possessions, though somewhat reduced by the heavy fines imposed upon him as a recusant, must have appeared an object of importance to the conspirators; nor will it be wondered at that every means were used to gain him to their cause. Acting, however, upon the principles that swayed the well-disposed of his party, the knight resisted all these overtures, and refused to take any share in proceedings from which his conscience and loyalty alike revolted. Baffled, but not defeated, Catesby returned to the charge on a new point of assault. Himself a widower (or supposed to be so), he solicited the hand of the lovely Viviana Radcliffe, Sir William's only child, and the sole heiress of his possessions. But his suit in this quarter was also unsuccessful. The knight rejected the proposal, alleging that his daughter had no inclination to any alliance, inasmuch as she entertained serious thoughts of vowing herself to Heaven. Thus foiled, Catesby ostensibly relinquished his design.

Shortly before the commencement of this history, a pilgrimage to Saint Winifred's Well in Flintshire was undertaken by Father Garnet, the provincial of the Jesuits before mentioned, in company with several distinguished Catholic personages of both sexes; and to this ceremonial Sir William and his daughter were urgently bidden. The invitation was declined on the part of Viviana, but accepted by the knight, who, though unwilling to leave home at a period of so much danger, or to commit his daughter to any care but his own, even for so short a space, felt it his duty to give countenance by his presence to the ceremonial. Accordingly, he departed for Chester on the previous day, as stated by the steward. And though Catesby professed ignorance on the subject, and even affirmed he had heard to the contrary, it may be doubted whether he was not secretly informed of the circumstance, and whether his arrival at this particular conjuncture was not preconceived.

Thus much in explanation of what is to follow.—The course

Catesby's reflections was cut short by the return of the steward, who, informing him that he had his mistress's commands to admit him, immediately lowered the drawbridge for that purpose. Dismounting, and committing his steed to one of the serving-men, who advanced to take it, Catesby followed his conductor through a stone gateway, and crossing the garden, was ushered into a spacious and lofty hall, furnished with a long massy oak table, at the upper end of which was a raised dais. At one side of the chamber yawned a huge arched fireplace, garnished with enormous andirons, on which smouldered a fire composed of mixed turf and wood. Above the chimneypiece hung a suit of chain-armour, with the battle-axe, helmet, and gauntlets of Sir John Radcliffe, the first possessor of Ordsall, who flourished in the reign of Edward the First: on the right, masking the entrance, stood a magnificent screen of carved oak.

Traversing this hall, Heydocke led the way to another large apartment; and placing lights on a Gothic-shaped table, offered a seat to the new comer, and departed. The room in which Catesby was left was termed the star-chamber—a name retained to this day—from the circumstance of its ceiling being moulded and painted to resemble the heavenly vault when studded with the luminaries of night. It was terminated by a deeply-embayed window filled with stained glass of the most gorgeous colours. The walls in some places were hung with arras, in others wainscoted with dark lustrous oak, embellished with scrolls, ciphers, and fanciful designs. The mantelpiece was of the same solid material, curiously carved, and of extraordinary size. It was adorned with the armorial bearings of the family—two bends engrailed, and in chief a label of three,—and other devices and inscriptions. The hearth was considerably raised above the level of the floor, and there was a peculiarity in the construction of the massy wooden pillars flanking it, that attracted the attention of Catesby, who rose with the intention of examining them more narrowly, when he was interrupted by the entrance of the lady of the mansion.

Advancing at a slow and dignified pace, Viviana Radcliffe courteously but gravely saluted her guest; and, without offering him her hand, motioned him to a chair, while she seated herself at a little distance. Catesby had seen her twice before; and whether the circumstances under which they now met might have caused some change in her demeanour, he could not tell, but he thought her singularly altered. A year ago, she had been a lively, laughing girl of seventeen, with a bright brown skin, dark flowing tresses, and eyes as black and radiant as those of a gipsy. She was now a grave, collected woman, infinitely more beautiful, but wholly changed in character. Her complexion had become a clear transparent white, and set off to great advantage her large luminous eyes and jetty brows. Her figure was tall and majestic; her features regular, delicately formed, and of the rarest and proudest class of beauty. Attired in a dress of black-wrought velvet, entirely without ornament except the rosary at her girdle, with a small ebony crucifix attached to it, she wore a close-fitting cap, likewise of black velvet, edged with pearls, beneath which her raven tresses were gathered in such a manner as to display most becomingly the smooth and snowy expanse of her forehead. The gravity of her manner, not less than her charms of person, seemed to strike Catesby mute. He

gazed on her in silent admiration for a brief space, utterly forgetful of the object of his visit, and the part he intended to play. During this pause she maintained the most perfect composure, and fixing her dark eyes full upon him, appeared to await the moment when he might choose to open the conversation.

Notwithstanding his age, and the dissolute and distracted life he had led, Catesby was still good-looking enough to produce a favourable impression upon any woman easily captivated by manly beauty. The very expression of his marked and peculiar physiognomy,—in some degree an index to his character,—was sufficient to rivet attention; and the mysterious interest generally inspired by his presence was not diminished on further acquaintance with him. Though somewhat stern in their expression, his features were strikingly handsome, cast in an oval mould, and clothed with the pointed beard and trimmed moustaches invariably met with in the portraits of Vandyck. His frame was strongly built, but well proportioned, and seemed capable of enduring the greatest fatigue. His dress was that of an ordinary gentleman of the period, and consisted of a doublet of quilted silk, of sober colour and stout texture; large trunk-hose, swelling out at the hips; and buff boots, armed with spurs with immense rowels. He wore a high and stiffly-starched ruff round his throat; and his apparel was completed by a short cloak of brown cloth, lined with silk of a similar colour. His arms were rapier and poniard, and his high-crowned plumed hat, of the peculiar form then in vogue, and looped on the “leer-side” with a diamond clasp, was thrown upon the table.

Some little time having elapsed, during which he made no effort to address her, Viviana broke silence.

“I understood you desired to speak with me on a matter of urgency, Mr. Catesby,” she remarked.

“I did so,” he replied, as if aroused from a reverie; “and I can only excuse my absence of mind and ill manners, on the plea that the contemplation of your charms has driven all other matter out of my head.”

“Mr. Catesby,” returned Viviana, rising, “if the purpose of your visit be merely to pay unmerited compliments, I must at once put an end to it.”

“I have only obeyed the impulse of my heart,” resumed the other, passionately, “and uttered what involuntarily rose to my lips. But,” he added, checking himself, “I will not offend you with my admiration. If you have read my letter to your father, you will not require to be informed of the object of my visit.”

“I have not read it,” replied Viviana, returning him the packet with the seal unbroken. “I can give no opinion on any matter of difficulty. And I have no desire to know any secret with which my father might not desire me to be acquainted.”

“Are we overheard?” inquired Catesby, glancing suspiciously at the fireplace.

“By no one whom you would care to overhear us,” returned the maiden.

“Then it is as I supposed,” rejoined Catesby. “Father Oldcorne is concealed behind *that mantelpiece?*”

Viviana smiled an affirmative.

“Let him come forth, I pray you,” returned Catesby. “What

have to say concerns him as much as yourself or your father; and I would gladly have his voice in the matter."

"You shall have it, my son," replied a reverend personage clad in a priestly garb, stepping from out one side of the mantelpiece, which flew suddenly open, disclosing a recess curiously contrived in the thickness of the wall. "You shall have it," said Father Oldcorne, for he it was, approaching and extending his arms over him. "Accept my blessing and my welcome."

Catesby received the benediction with bowed head and bended knee.

"And now," continued the priest, "what has the bravest soldier of our church to declare to its lowliest servant?"

Catesby then briefly explained, as he had before done to the steward, why he had taken Manchester in his route to North Wales; and, after lamenting his inability to render any assistance to the unfortunate priests, he went on to state that he had accidentally learnt, from a few words let fall by the pursuivant to his attendant, that a warrant had been sent by the Earl of Salisbury for Sir William Radcliffe's arrest.

"My father's arrest!" exclaimed Viviana, trembling violently. "What—what is laid to his charge?"

"Felony," rejoined Catesby, sternly—"felony, without benefit of clergy—for so it is accounted by the present execrable laws of our land,—in harbouring a Jesuit priest. If he is convicted of the offence, his punishment will be death—death on the gibbet, accompanied by indignities worse than those shown to a common felon."

"Holy Virgin!" ejaculated Father Oldcorne, lifting up his hands, and raising his eyes to heaven.

"From what I gathered, the officers will visit this house to-night," continued Catesby.

"Our Lady be praised, they will not find him!" cried Viviana, who had been thrown into an agony of distress. "What is to be done in this frightful emergency, holy father?" she added, turning to the priest with a supplicating look.

"Heaven only knows, dear daughter," replied Oldcorne. "You had better appeal for counsel to one more able to afford it than I am,—Mr. Catesby. Well aware of the crafty devices of our enemies, and having often eluded their snares himself, he may enable you to escape them. My own course is clear. I shall quit this roof at once, deeply and bitterly regretting that by entering it I have placed those whom I hold so dear, and from whom I have experienced so much kindness, in such fearful jeopardy."

"Oh, no, father!" exclaimed Viviana, "you shall not go."

"Daughter," replied Oldcorne, solemnly, "I have long borne the cross of Christ—have long endured the stripes, inflicted upon me by the adversaries of our faith, in patience; and my last actions and last breath shall testify to the truth of our holy religion. But though I could endure aught on my own account, I cannot consent to bring misery and destruction upon others. Hinder me not, dear daughter. I will go at once."

"Hold, father!" interposed Catesby. "The step you would take *may bring about what you are most anxious to avoid. If you are discovered and apprehended in this neighbourhood, suspicion will still attach to your protectors, and the secret of your departure will be rung from some of the more timid of the household. Tarry where you*

are. Let the pursuivant make his search. I will engage to baffle his vigilance."

"He speaks the truth, dear father," returned Viviana. "You must not—shall not depart. There are plenty of hiding-places, as you know, within the mansion. Let them be as rigorous as they may in their search, they will not discover you."

"Whatever course you adjudge best for the security of others, I will pursue," rejoined Oldcorne, turning to Catesby. "Put me out of the question."

"My opinion has already been given, father," replied Catesby. "Remain where you are."

"But if the officers should ascertain that my father is at Chester, and pursue him thither?" cried Viviana, suddenly struck by a new cause of alarm.

"A messenger must be immediately despatched after him to give him warning," returned Catesby.

"Will you be that messenger?" asked the maiden, eagerly.

"I would shed my heart's best blood to pleasure you," returned Catesby.

"Then I may count upon this service?—for which, rest assured, I will not prove ungrateful," she rejoined.

"You may," answered Catesby. "And yet I would, on Father Oldcorne's account, that my departure might be delayed till to-morrow."

"The delay might be fatal," cried Viviana. "You must be in Chester before that time."

"Doubt it not," returned Catesby. "Charged with your wishes, the wind shall scarcely outstrip my speed."

So saying, he marched irresolutely towards the door, as if about to depart, when, just as he had reached it, he turned sharply round and threw himself at Viviana's feet.

"Forgive me, Viviana," he cried, "if I once again, even at a critical moment like the present, dare to renew my suit. I fancied I had subdued my passion for you, but your presence has awakened it with greater violence than ever."

"Rise, sir, I pray," rejoined the maiden, in an offended tone.

"Hear me, I beseech you," continued Catesby, seizing her hand. "Before you reject my suit, consider well that in these perilous seasons, when no true Catholic can call his life his own, you may need a protector."

"In the event you describe, Mr. Catesby," answered Viviana, "I would at once fulfil the intention I have formed of devoting myself to Heaven, and retire to the convent of Benedictine nuns, founded by Lady Mary Percy, at Brussels."

"You would much more effectually serve the cause of your religion by acceding to my suit," observed Catesby, rising.

"How so?" she inquired.

"Listen to me, Viviana," he rejoined, gravely, "and let my words be deeply graven upon your heart. In your hands rests the destiny of the Catholic Church."

"In mine!" exclaimed Viviana.

"In yours," returned Catesby. "A mighty blow is about to struck for her deliverance."

"Ay, marry is it," cried Oldcorne, with sudden fervour. "Redemption draweth nigh; the year of visitation approacheth to an end; and jubilation is at hand. England shall again be called a happy realm, a blessed country, a religious people. Those who knew the former glory of religion shall lift up their hands for joy to see it returned again. Righteousness shall prosper, and infidelity be plucked up by the root. False error shall vanish like smoke, and they which saw it shall say, Where is it become? The daughters of Babylon shall be cast down, and in the dust lament their ruin. Proud Heresy shall strike her sail, and groan as a beast crushed under a cart-wheel. The memory of novelties shall perish with a crack, and as a ruinous house falling to the ground. Repent, ye seducers, with speed, and prevent the dreadful wrath of the Powerable. He will come as flame that burneth out beyond the furnace. His fury shall fly forth as thunder, and pitch upon their tops that malign him. They shall perish in his fury, and melt like wax before the fire."

"Amen!" ejaculated Catesby, as the priest concluded. "You have spoken prophetically, father."

"I have but recited a prayer transmitted to me by Father Garnet," rejoined Oldcorne.

"Do you discern any hidden meaning in it?" demanded Catesby.

"Yea, verily, my son," returned the priest. "In the '*false error vanishing like SMOKE*,'—in the '*house perishing with a CRACK*,'—and in the '*fury flying forth as THUNDER*,'—I read the mode the great work shall be brought about."

"And you applaud the design?" asked Catesby, eagerly.

"*Non vero factum probo, sed eventum amo*," rejoined the priest.

"The secret is safe in your keeping, father?" asked Catesby, uneasily.

"As if it had been disclosed to me in private confession," replied Oldcorne.

"Hum!" muttered Catesby. "Confessions of as much consequence to the state have ere now been revealed, father."

"A decree has been passed by his Holiness Clement VIII., forbidding all such revelations," replied Oldcorne. "And the question has been recently propounded by a learned brother of our order, Father Antonio Delrio, who, in his '*Magical Disquisitions*,' putteth it thus:—'*Supposing a malefactor shall confess that he himself or some other has laid GUNPOWDER, or the like combustible matter, under a building*,'"

"Ha!" exclaimed Catesby, starting.

"—'*And, unless it be taken away*,'" proceeded the priest, regarding him fixedly, "'the whole house will be burnt, the prince destroyed, and as many as go into or out of the city will come to great mischief or peril—'"

"Well?" exclaimed Catesby.

"The point then arises," continued Oldcorne, "whether the priest may make use of the secret thus obtained for the good of the govern-

** Confitetur maleficus se vel alium posuisse pulverem vel quid aliud sub tali limine, et nisi tollantur domum comburendam, principem interiturum, quotquot ibidem egredienturque in magnam perniciem aut periculum venturos.—DELRIO, sq. Mag., lib. vi., cap. i. [Edit. 1600.]*

ment, and the averting of such danger; and, after fully discussing it, Father Delrio decides in the negative."

"Enough," returned Catesby.

"By whom is the blow to be struck?" asked Viviana, who had listened to the foregoing discourse in silent wonder.

"By me," answered Catesby. "It is for you to nerve my arm."

"You speak in riddles," she replied. "I understand you not."

"Question Father Oldcorne, then, as to my meaning," rejoined Catesby; "he will tell you that, allied to you, I could not fail in the enterprise on which I am engaged."

"It is the truth, dear daughter," Oldcorne asseverated.

"I will not inquire further into this mystery," returned Viviana, "for such it is to me. But, believing what you both assert, I answer, that willingly as I would lay down my life for the welfare of our holy religion—persuading myself, as I do, that I have constancy enough to endure martyrdom for its sake,—I cannot consent to your proposal. Nay, if I must avouch the whole truth," she continued, blushing deeply, "my affections are already engaged,—though to one with whom I can never hope to be united."

"You have your answer, my son," observed the priest.

Catesby replied with a look of the deepest mortification and disappointment; and, bowing coldly to Viviana, said, "I now depart to obey your behests, Miss Radcliffe."

"Commend me in all duty to my dear father," replied Viviana, "and believe that I shall for ever feel bound to you for your zeal."

"Neglect not all due caution, father," observed Catesby, glancing significantly at Oldcorne. "Forewarned, forearmed."

"Doubt me not, my son," rejoined the Jesuit. "My prayers shall be for you."

Gentem auferte perfidam
Credentium de finibus,
Ut Christo laudes debitas.
Persolvamus alacriter."

After receiving a parting benediction from the priest, Catesby took his leave. His steed was speedily brought to the door by the old steward; and mounting it, he crossed the drawbridge, which was immediately raised behind him, and hastened on his journey.

CHAPTER IV.—THE SEARCH.

IMMEDIATELY after Catesby's departure, Heydocke was summoned to his mistress's presence. He found her with the priest, and was informed that in all probability the house would be visited that night by the messengers of the privy council. The old steward received the intelligence as he might have done his death-warrant, and looked so bewildered and affrighted, that Viviana half repented having acquainted him with it.

"Compose yourself, Master Heydocke," she said, trying to reason him out of his fears; "*the search may not take place. And if it does, there is nothing to be alarmed at. I am not afraid, you perceive.*"

"*Nothing to be alarmed at, my dear young lady!*" gasped the

steward. "You have never witnessed a midnight search for a priest by these ruffianly catchpoles, as I have, or you would not say so. Father Oldcorne will comprehend my uneasiness, and excuse it. The miscreants break into the house like robbers, and treat its inmates worse than robbers would treat them. They have no regard for decency,—no consideration for sex,—no respect for persons. Not a chamber is sacred from them. If a door is bolted, they burst it open; a cabinet locked, they tarry not for the key. They pull down the hangings, thrust their rapier-points into the crevices of the wainscot, discharge their fire-arms against the wall, and sometimes threaten to pull down the house itself, if the object of their quest be not delivered to them. Their oaths, abominations, and menaces are horrible; and their treatment of females, even of your degree, honoured mistress, is too barbarous to relate. Poor Lady Neville died of the fright she got by such a visit at dead of night to her residence in Holborn. Mistress Vavasour, of York, lost her senses; and many others whom I could mention have been equal sufferers. Nothing to be alarmed at! Heaven grant, my dear, dear young lady, that you may never be fatally convinced to the contrary."

"Suppose my apprehension to be as great as your own, Master Heydocke," replied Viviana, who, though somewhat infected by his terrors, still maintained her firmness, "I do not see how the danger is to be averted by idle lamentations and misgivings. We must meet it boldly, and trust to Him who is our only safeguard in the hour of peril for protection. Do not alarm the household, but let all retire to rest as usual."

"Right, daughter," observed the priest. "Preparations for resistance would only excite suspicion."

"Can you depend on the servants, in case they are examined?" asked Viviana of the steward, who by this time had partially recovered his composure.

"I think so," returned Heydocke; "but the threats of the officers are so dreadful, and their conduct so violent and outrageous, that I can scarcely answer for myself. I would not advise your reverence to remain in that hiding-place," he added, pointing to the chimneypiece; "they are sure to discover it."

"If not here, where shall I conceal myself?" rejoined Oldcorne, uneasily.

"There are many nooks in which your reverence might hide," replied the steward; "but the knaves are so crafty, and so well experienced in their vocation, that I dare not recommend any of them as secure. I would advise you to remain on the watch, and, in case of alarm, I will conduct you to the oratory in the north gallery, adjoining Mistress Viviana's sleeping-chamber, where there is a panel in the wall, known only to myself and my master, opening upon a secret passage running many hundred yards under ground, and communicating with a small out-building on the other side of the moat. There is a contrivance in this passage, which I will explain to your reverence, if need be, and it will cut off any possibility of pursuit in that quarter."

"Be it so," replied the priest. "I place myself in your hands, good Master Heydocke, well assured of your fidelity. I shall remain throughout the night in this chamber, occupied in my devotions."

"You will suffer me to pray with you, father, I trust?" said Viviana.

"If you desire it, assuredly, dear daughter," rejoined Oldcorne; "but I am unwilling you should sacrifice your rest."

"It will be no sacrifice, father, for I should not slumber, even if I sought my couch," she returned. "Go, good Heydocke; keep vigilant watch; and, if you hear the slightest noise without, fail not to give us warning."

The steward bowed, and departed.

Some hours elapsed, during which nothing occurred to alarm Viviana and her companion, who consumed the time in prayer and devout conversation; when, just at the stroke of two,—as the former was kneeling before her spiritual adviser, and receiving absolution for the slight offences of which a being so pure-minded could be supposed capable,—a noise like the falling of a bar of iron was heard beneath the window. The priest turned pale, and cast a look of uneasiness at the maiden, who said nothing, but snatching up the light, and motioning him to remain quiet, hurried out of the room in search of the steward. He was nowhere to be found. In vain she examined all the lower rooms, in vain called to him by name. No answer was returned.

Greatly terrified, she was preparing to retrace her steps, when she heard the sound of muttered voices in the hall. Extinguishing her light, she advanced to the door, which was left ajar, and taking care not to expose herself to observation, beheld several armed figures, some of whom bore dark lanterns, while others surrounded and menaced with their drawn swords the unfortunate steward. From their discourse she ascertained, that having thrown a plank across the moat, and concealed themselves within the garden until they had reconnoitred the premises, they had contrived to gain admittance, unperceived, through the window of a small back-room, in which they had surprised Heydocke, who had fallen asleep on his post, and captured him. One amongst their number, who appeared to act as leader, and who, from his garb and the white wand he carried, Viviana knew must be a pursuivant, now proceeded to interrogate the prisoner. To every question proposed to him the steward shook his head, and, in spite of the threats of the examinant, and the blows of his followers, he persisted in maintaining silence.

"If we cannot make this contumacious rascal speak, we will find others more tractable," observed the pursuivant. "I will not leave any corner of the house unvisited, nor a soul within it unquestioned. Ah! here they come!"

As he spoke, several of the serving-men, with some of the female domestics, who had been alarmed by the noise, rushed into the hall, and on seeing it filled with armed men, were about to retreat, when they were instantly seized and detained. A scene of great confusion now ensued. The women screamed, and cried for mercy, while the men struggled and fought with their captors. Commanding silence at length, the pursuivant proclaimed in the king's name, that whoever would guide him to the hiding-place of Father Oldcorne, a Jesuit priest, who, it was known, and could be proved, was harboured within the mansion, should receive a free pardon and reward; while those wh

screened him, or connived at his concealment, were liable to fine, imprisonment, and even more severe punishment. Each servant was then questioned separately. But though all were more or less rudely dealt with, no information could be elicited.

Meanwhile, Viviana was a prey to the most intolerable anxiety. Unable to reach Father Oldcorne without crossing the hall, which she did not dare to attempt, she gave him up for lost; her sole hope being that, on hearing the cries of the domestics, he would provide for his own safety. Her anxiety was still further increased when the pursuivant, having exhausted his patience by fruitless interrogatories, and satisfied his malice by frightening two of the females into fits, departed with a portion of his band to search the house, leaving the rest as a guard over the prisoners.

Viviana then felt that, if she would save Father Oldcorne, the attempt must be made without a moment's delay, and at any hazard. Watching her opportunity, when the troopers were occupied—some in helping themselves to such viands and liquors as they could lay hands upon—some in searching the persons of the prisoners for amulets and relics—while others, more humane, were trying to revive the swooning women, she contrived to steal unperceived across the lower end of the hall. Having gained the passage, she found, to her horror, that the pursuivant and his band were already within the star-chamber. They were sounding the walls with hammers and mallets, and, from their exclamations, she learnt that they had discovered the retreat behind the fireplace, and were about to break it open.

"We have him!" roared the pursuivant, in a voice of triumph. "The old owl's roost is here!"

Viviana, who stood at the door, drew in her breath, expecting that the next moment would inform her that the priest was made captive. Instead of this, she was delighted to find, from the oaths of rage and disappointment uttered by the troopers, that he had eluded them.

"He must be in the house, at all events," growled the pursuivant; "nor is it long since he quitted his hiding-place, as this cushion proves. We will not go away without him. And now, let us proceed to the upper chambers."

Hearing their footsteps approach, Viviana darted off, and quickly ascending the principal staircase, entered a long corridor. Uncertain what to do, she was about to proceed to her own chamber and bar the door, when she felt her arm grasped by a man. With difficulty repressing a shriek, she strove to disengage herself, when a whisper told her it was the priest.

"Heaven be praised!" cried Viviana, "you are safe. How—how did you escape?"

"I flew up-stairs on hearing the voices," replied Oldcorne. "But what has happened to the steward?"

"He is a prisoner," replied Viviana.

"All then is lost, unless you are acquainted with the secret panel he spoke of in the oratory," rejoined Oldcorne.

"Alas! father, I am wholly ignorant of it," she answered. "But, *come with me into my chamber; they will not dare to invade it.*"

"*I know not that,*" returned the priest, despairingly. "*These sacrilegious villains would not respect the sanctity of the altar itself.*"

"They come!" cried Viviana, as lights were seen at the foot of the stairs. "Take my hand: this way, father."

They had scarcely gained the room, and fastened the door, when the pursuivant and his attendants appeared in the corridor. The officer, it would seem, had been well instructed where to search, or was sufficiently practised in his duty, for he proceeded at once to several hiding-places in the different chambers which he visited. In one room he detected a secret staircase in the wall, which he mounted, and discovered a small chapel built in the roof. Stripping it of its altar, its statue of the Virgin, its crucifix, pix, chalice, and other consecrated vessels, he descended, and continued his search. Viviana's chamber was now the only one unvisited. Trying the door, and finding it locked, he tapped against it with his wand.

"Who knocks?" asked the maiden.

"A state-messenger," was the reply. "I demand entrance in the king's name."

"You cannot have it," she replied. "It is my sleeping-chamber."

"My duty allows me no alternative," rejoined the pursuivant, harshly. "If you will not admit me quietly, I must use force."

"Do you know to whom you offer this rudeness?" returned Viviana.

"I am the daughter of Sir William Radcliffe."

"I know it," replied the pursuivant; "but I am not exceeding my authority. I hold a warrant for your father's arrest. And, if he had not been from home, I should have carried him to prison along with the Jesuit priest who, I suspect, is concealed within your chamber. Open the door, I command you; and do not hinder me in the execution of my duty."

As no answer was returned to the application, the pursuivant commanded his men to burst open the door; and the order was promptly obeyed.

The chamber was empty.

On searching it, however, the pursuivant found a door concealed by the hangings of the bed, which, though bolted on the other side, speedily yielded to his efforts. Passing through it, he entered upon a narrow gallery, at the extremity of which his progress was stopped by another door, likewise fastened on the further side. On bursting it open he entered a small oratory, wainscoted with oak, and lighted by an oriel window filled with stained glass, through which the newly-risen moon was pouring its full radiance, and discovered the object of his search.

"Father Oldcorne, I arrest you as a Jesuit and a traitor," shouted the pursuivant, in a voice of exultation. "Seize him," he added, calling to his men.

"You shall not take him," cried Viviana, clinging despairingly to the priest, who offered no resistance, but clasped a crucifix to his breast.

"Leave go your hold, young mistress," rejoined the pursuivant, grasping Oldcorne by the collar of his vestment, and dragging him along; "and rest thankful that I do not make you also my prisoner."

"Take me; but spare him!—in mercy spare him!" shrieked Viviana.

"You solicit mercy from one who knows it not, daughter," observe the priest. "Lead on, sir. I am ready to attend you."

"Your destination is the New Fleet, father," retorted the pursuivant, in a tone of bitter raillery; "unless you prefer the cell in Radcliffe Hall lately vacated by your saintly predecessor, Father Woodroffe."

Viviana shrieked for help.

"You may spare your voice, fair lady," sneered the pursuivant. "No help is at hand. Your servants are all prisoners."

The words were scarcely uttered, when a sliding panel in the wall flew open, and Guy Fawkes, followed by Humphrey Chetham and another personage, sprang through the aperture, and presented a petronel at the head of the pursuivant.

CHAPTER V.—CHAT MOSS.

THE pursuivant was taken so completely unawares by the sudden appearance of Guy Fawkes and his companions, that he made no attempt at resistance. Nor were his attendants less confounded. Before they recovered from their surprise, Humphrey Chetham seized Viviana in his arms, and darting through the panel, called to the priest to follow him. Father Oldcorne was about to comply, when one of the soldiers, grasping the surcingle at his waist, dragged him forcibly backwards. The next moment, however, he was set free by Guy Fawkes, who, felling the man to the ground, and interposing himself between the priest and the other soldier, enabled the former to make good his retreat. This done, he planted himself in front of the panel, and, with a petronel in each hand, menaced his opponents.

"Fly for your lives!" he shouted, in a loud voice, to the others. "Not a moment is to be lost. I have taken greater odds, and in a worse cause, and have not been worsted. Heed me not, I say. I will defend the passage till you are beyond reach of danger. Fly!—fly!"

"After them!" vociferated the pursuivant, stamping with rage and vexation; "after them instantly! Hew down that bold traitor. Show him no quarter. His life is forfeit to the king. Kill him as you would a dog!"

But the men having no fire-arms, were so much intimidated by the fierce looks of Guy Fawkes, and the deadly weapons he pointed at their heads, that they hesitated to obey their leader's injunctions.

"Do you here what I say to you, cravens?" roared the pursuivant. "Cut him down without mercy."

"They dare not move a footstep," rejoined Guy Fawkes, in a derisive tone.

"Recreants!" cried the pursuivant, foaming with rage; "is my prey to be snatched from me, at the very moment I have secured it, through your cowardice? Obey me instantly, or, as Heaven shall judge me, I will denounce you to my Lord Derby and the commissioners, as aiders and abettors in Father Oldcorne's escape!—And you well know what *your punishment* will be if I do so. What!—are you afraid of one *man?*"

"Our pikes are no match for his petronels," observed the foremost *ladier, sullenly.*

"They are not," rejoined Guy Fawkes, "and you will do well not to compel me to prove the truth of your assertion. As to you, Master Pursuivant," he continued, with a look so stern that the other quailed before it, "unwilling as I am to shed blood, I shall hold your life, if I am compelled to take it, but just retribution for the fate you have brought upon the unfortunate Elizabeth Orton."

"Ha!" exclaimed the pursuivant, 'starting, "I thought I recognised you. You are the soldier in the Spanish garb who saved that false prophetess from drowning."

"I saved her only for a more lingering death," rejoined Guy Fawkes.

"I know it," retorted the pursuivant. "I found her dead body when I visited her cell on my way hither, and gave orders to have it interred without coffin or shroud in that part of the burial-ground of the collegiate church in Manchester allotted to common felons."

"I know not what stays my hand," rejoined Guy Fawkes, fiercely; "but I am strongly tempted to give you a grave beside her."

"I will put your daring to the proof," cried the pursuivant, snatching a pike from one of his followers, and brandishing it over his head. "Throw down your arms, or you die!"

"Back!" exclaimed Guy Fawkes, presenting a petronel at him, "or I lodge a bullet in your brain."

"Be advised by me, and rush not on certain destruction, good Master Pursuivant," said the foremost soldier, plucking his leader's mantle. "I see by his bloodthirsty looks that the villain is in earnest."

"I hear footsteps," cried the other soldier; "our comrades are at hand."

"Then it is time for me to depart," cried Guy Fawkes, springing through the secret door, and closing it after him.

"Confusion!" exclaimed the pursuivant. "But he shall not escape. Break open the panel."

The order was promptly obeyed. The men battered the oak board, which was of great thickness, with their pikes, but it resisted every effort; nor was it until the arrival of a fresh band of soldiers with lights, mallets, chisels, and other implements suitable to the purpose, that it could be forced open. This accomplished, the pursuivant, commanding his attendants to follow him, dashed through the aperture. As they proceeded singly along the narrow passage, the roof became so low that they were compelled to adopt a stooping posture. In this manner they hurried on until their further progress was stopped by a massive stone door, which appeared to descend from above by some hidden contrivance, no trace of bolt or other fastening being discernible. The flag fitted closely in channels in the walls, and had all the appearance of solid masonry. After examining this obstacle for a moment, the pursuivant was convinced that any attempt to move it would be impracticable, and muttering a deep execration, he gave the word to return.

"From the course it appears to take," he observed, "this passage must communicate with the garden—perhaps with the further side of the moat. *We may yet secure them, if we use despatch.*"

To return to the fugitives. On arriving at the point where the stone door was situated, which he discovered by the channels in the wall above mentioned, Guy Fawkes searched for an iron ring, and, havi

found it, drew it towards him, and the ponderous flag slowly dropped into its place. He then groped his way cautiously along in the dark, until his foot encountered the top of a ladder, down which he crept, and landed on the floor of a damp deep vault. Having taken the precaution to remove the ladder, he hastened onwards for about fifty yards, when he came to a steep flight of stone steps, distinguishable by a feeble glimmer from above; and mounting them, emerged through an open trap-door into a small building situated at the western side of the moat, where, to his surprise and disappointment, he found the other fugitives.

"How comes it you are here?" he exclaimed, in a reproachful tone. "I kept the wolves at bay thus long, to enable you to make good your retreat."

"Viviana is too weak to move," replied Humphrey Chetham; "and I could not persuade Father Oldcorne to leave her."

"I care not what becomes of me," said the priest. "The sooner my painful race is run, the better. But I cannot—will not abandon my dear charge thus."

"Think not of me, father, I implore you," rejoined Viviana, who had sunk overpowered with terror and exhaustion. "I shall be better soon. Master Chetham, I am assured, will remain with me till our enemies have departed, and I will then return to the hall."

"Command me as you please," replied Humphrey Chetham. "You have but to express a wish to insure its fulfilment on my part."

"Oh that you had suffered Mr. Catesby to tarry with us till the morning, as he himself proposed, dear daughter!" observed the priest, turning to Viviana.

"Has Catesby been here?" inquired Guy Fawkes, with a look of astonishment.

"Ay," replied Oldcorne. "He came to warn us that the hall would be this night searched by the officers of state; and he also brought word that a warrant had been issued by the privy council for the arrest of Sir William Radcliffe."

"Where is he now?" demanded Fawkes, hastily.

"On the way to Chester, whither he departed in all haste, at Viviana's urgent request, to apprise her father of his danger," rejoined the priest.

"This is strange!" muttered Guy Fawkes. "Catesby here, and I not know it!"

"He had a secret motive for his visit, my son," whispered Oldcorne, significantly.

"So I conclude, father," replied Fawkes, in the same tone.

"Viviana Radcliffe," murmured Humphrey Chetham, in low and tender accents, "something tells me that this moment will decide my future fate. Emboldened by the mysterious manner in which we have been brought together, and you, as it were, have been thrown upon my protection, I venture to declare the passion I have long indulged for you—a passion which, though deep and fervent as ever agitated human bosom, has hitherto, from the difference of our rank, and yet more from the difference of our religious opinions, been without hope. What has just occurred—added to the peril in which your worthy father stands, and the difficulties in which you yourself will necessarily be in-

volved—makes me cast aside all misgiving, and perhaps with too much presumption, but with a confident belief that the sincerity of my love renders me not wholly undeserving of your regard, earnestly solicit you to give me a husband's right to watch over and defend you."

Viviana was silent; but even by the imperfect light the young merchant could discern that her cheek was covered with blushes.

"Your answer?" he cried, taking her hand.

"You must take it from my lips, Master Chetham," interposed the priest; "Viviana Radcliffe never can be yours."

"Be pleased to let her speak for herself, reverend sir," rejoined the young merchant, angrily.

"I represent her father, and have acquainted you with his determination," rejoined the priest. "Appeal to her, and she will confirm my words."

"Viviana, is this true?" asked Chetham. "Does your father object to your union with me?"

Viviana sighed deeply, and gently withdrew her hand from the young merchant's grasp.

"Then there is no hope for me?" cried Chetham.

"Alas! no," replied Viviana; "nor for me—of earthly affection. I am already dead to the world."

"How so?" he asked.

"I am about to vow myself to Heaven," she answered.

"Viviana!" exclaimed the young man, throwing himself at her feet, "reflect!—oh! reflect before you take this fatal, this irrevocable step."

"Rise, sir," interposed the priest, sternly; "you plead in vain. Sir William Radcliffe will never wed his daughter to a heretic. In his name I command you to desist from further solicitation."

"I obey," replied Chetham, rising.

"We lose time here," observed Guy Fawkes, who had been lost for a moment in reflection. "I will undertake to provide for your safety, father. But what must be done with Viviana? She cannot be left here, and her return to the hall would be attended with danger."

"I will not return till the miscreants have quitted it," said Viviana.

"Their departure is uncertain," replied Fawkes. "When they are balked of their prey they sometimes haunt a dwelling for weeks."

"What will become of me?" cried Viviana, distractedly.

"It were vain, I fear, to entreat you to accept an asylum with my father, at Clayton Hall, or at my own residence at Crumpsall?" said Humphrey Chetham.

"Your offer is most kind, sir," replied Oldcorne, "and is duly appreciated. But Viviana will see the propriety, on every account, of declining it."

"I do—I do," she acquiesced.

"Will you entrust yourself to my protection?" observed Fawkes.

"Willingly," replied the priest, answering for her. "We shall find some place of refuge," he added, turning to Viviana, "where your father can join us, and where we can remain concealed till this storm has blown over."

"I know many such," rejoined Fawkes, "both in this county and in Yorkshire, and will guide you to one."

"My horses are at your service," said Humphrey Chetham. "They are tied beneath the trees in the avenue. My servant shall bring them to the door." And turning to his attendant, he gave him directions to that effect. "I was riding hither an hour before midnight," he continued, addressing Viviana, "to offer you assistance, having accidentally heard the pursuivant mention his meditated visit to Ordsall Hall to one of his followers, when, as I approached the gates, this person," pointing to Guy Fawkes, "crossed my path, and seizing the bridle of my steed, demanded whether I was a friend to Sir William Radcliffe. I answered in the affirmative, and desired to know the motive of his inquiry. He then told me that the house was invested by a numerous band of armed men, who had crossed the moat by means of a plank, and were at that moment concealed within the garden. This intelligence, besides filling me with alarm, disconcerted all my plans, as I had hoped to be beforehand with them—their inquisitorial searches being generally made at a late hour, when all the inmates of a house intended to be surprised are certain to have retired to rest. While I was bitterly reproaching myself for my dilatoriness, and considering what course it would be best to pursue, my servant, Martin Heydocke—son to your father's old steward—who had ridden up at the stranger's approach, informed me that he was acquainted with a secret passage communicating beneath the moat with the hall. Upon this I dismounted; and fastening my horse to a tree, ordered him to lead me to it without an instant's delay. The stranger, who gave his name as Guy Fawkes, and professed himself a staunch Catholic, and a friend of Father Oldcorne, begged permission to join us in a tone so earnest, that I at once acceded to his request. We then proceeded to this building, and after some search discovered the trap-door; but much time was lost, owing to our being unprovided with lights, in the subterranean passage; and it was more than two hours before we could find the ring connected with the stone door, the mystery of which Martin explained to us. This delay we feared would render our scheme abortive, when, just as we reached the panel, we heard your shrieks. The spring was touched, and—you know the rest."

"And shall never forget it," replied Viviana, in a tone of the deepest gratitude.

At this juncture, the tramp of horses was heard at the door; and the next moment it was thrown open by the younger Heydocke, who, with a look and in a voice of the utmost terror, exclaimed, "They are coming!—they are coming!"

"The pursuivant?" cried Guy Fawkes.

"Not he alone, but the whole gang," rejoined Martin. "Some of them are lowering the drawbridge, while others are crossing the plank. Several are on horseback, and I think I discern the pursuivant amongst the number. They have seen me, and are hurrying in this direction."

As he spoke, a loud shout confirmed his statement.

"We are lost!" exclaimed Oldcorne.

"Do not despair, father," rejoined Guy Fawkes. "Heaven will not abandon its faithful servants. The Lord will deliver us out of the hands of the Amalekites."

"To horse, then, if you would indeed avoid them," urged Humphrey

Chetham. "The shouts grow louder. Your enemies are fast approaching."

"Viviana," said Guy Fawkes, "are you willing to fly with us?"

"I will do anything rather than be left to those horrible men," she answered.

Guy Fawkes then raised her in his arms, and sprang with his lovely burden upon the nearest charger. His example was quickly followed by Humphrey Chetham, who, vaulting on the other horse, assisted the priest to mount behind him. While this took place Martin Heydocke darted into the shed, and instantly bolted the door.

It was a beautiful moonlight night, almost as bright as day, and the movements of each party were fully revealed to the other. Guy Fawkes perceived at a glance that they were surrounded; and, though he had no fears for himself, he was full of apprehension for the safety of his companion. While debating with himself as to the course it would be best to pursue, Humphrey Chetham shouted to him to turn to the left, and started off in that direction. Grasping his fair charge, whom he had placed before him on the saddle, firmly with his left arm, and wrapping her in his ample cloak, Guy Fawkes drew his sword, and striking spurs into his steed, followed in the same track.

The little fabric which had afforded them temporary shelter, it has already been mentioned, was situated on the west of the hall, at a short distance from the moat, and was screened from observation by a small shrubbery. No sooner did the fugitives emerge from this cover than loud outcries were raised by their antagonists, and every effort was made to intercept them. On the right, galloping towards them on a light but swift courser, taken from Sir William Radcliffe's stables, came the pursuivant, attended by half a dozen troopers, who had accommodated themselves with horses in the same manner as their leader. Between them and the road leading to Manchester were stationed several armed men on foot. At the rear, voices proclaimed that others were in full pursuit; while in front, a fourth detachment menaced them with their pikes. Thus beset on all sides, it seemed scarcely possible to escape. Nothing daunted, however, by the threats and vociferations with which they were received, the two horsemen boldly charged this party. The encounter was instantaneous. Guy Fawkes ward off a blow which, if it had taken effect, must have robbed Viviana of life, and struck down the fellow who aimed it. At the same moment his career was checked by another assailant, who, catching his bridle with the hook of his halbert, commanded him to surrender. Fawkes replied by cleaving the staff of the weapon asunder, and having thus disembarrassed himself, was about to pursue his course, when he perceived that Humphrey Chetham was in imminent danger from a couple of soldiers who had stopped him, and were trying to unhorse his companion. Riding up to them, Guy Fawkes, by a vigorous and well-directed attack, speedily drove them off; and the fugitives being now unimpeded, were enabled to continue their career.

The foregoing occurrences were witnessed by the pursuivant with the utmost rage. Pouring forth a torrent of threats and imprecations, he swore never to rest till he had secured his prey, and urging his courser to its utmost speed, commanded his men to give chase. Skirting a sluice connecting the moat with the Irwell, Humphre

Chetham, who, as better acquainted with the country than his companions, took the lead, proceeded along its edge for about a hundred yards, and then suddenly striking across a narrow bridge covered with sod, entered the open fields. Hitherto, Viviana had remained silent. Though fully aware of the risk she had run, she gave no sign of alarm—not even when the blow was aimed against her life; and it was only on conceiving the danger in some degree passed, that she ventured to express her gratitude.

"You have displayed so much courage," said Guy Fawkes, in answer to her speech, "that it would be unpardonable to deceive you. Our foes are too near, and too well mounted, to make it by any means certain we shall escape them—unless by stratagem."

"They are within a hundred yards of us," cried Humphrey Chetham, glancing fearfully backwards. "They have possessed themselves of your father's fleetest horses; and, if I mistake not, the rascally pursuivant has secured your favourite barb."

"My gentle Zayda?" exclaimed Viviana. "Then indeed we are lost. She has not her match for speed."

"If she bring her rider to us alone, she will do us good service," observed Guy Fawkes, significantly.

The same notion, almost at the same moment, occurred to the pursuivant. Having witnessed the prowess displayed by Guy Fawkes in his recent attack on the soldiers, he felt no disposition to encounter so formidable an opponent single-handed; and finding that the high-mettled barb on which he was mounted, by its superior speed and fiery temper, would inevitably place him in such a dilemma, he prudently resolved to halt, and exchange it for a more manageable steed.

This delay was of great service to the fugitives, and enabled them to get considerably ahead. They had now gained a narrow lane, and tracking it, speedily reached the rocky banks of the Irwell. Galloping along a footpath that followed the serpentine course of the stream for a quarter of a mile, they arrived at a spot marked by a bed of osiers, where Humphrey Chetham informed them there was a ford.

Accordingly, they plunged into the river, and while stemming the current, which here ran with great swiftness and rose up above the saddles, the neighing of a steed was heard from the bank they had quitted. Turning at the sound, Viviana beheld her favourite courser on the summit of a high rock. The soldier to whom Zayda was entrusted had speedily, as the pursuivant foresaw, distanced his companions, and had chosen this elevated position to take sure aim with his caliver. The next moment a bullet struck against Guy Fawkes's brigandine, but without doing him any injury. The soldier, however, did not escape so lightly. Startled by the discharge, the fiery barb leaped from the precipice into the river, and throwing her rider, who was borne off by the rapid stream, swam towards the opposite bank, which she reached, just as the others were landing. At the sound of her mistress's voice she stood still, and allowed Humphrey Chetham to lay hold of her bridle; and Viviana declaring she was able to mount her, Guy Fawkes, who felt that such an arrangement was most likely to *conduce to her safety*, and who was, moreover, inclined to view the occurrence as a providential interference in their behalf, immediately *assisted her into the saddle*.

Before this transfer could be effected, the pursuivant and his attendants had begun to ford the stream. The former had witnessed the accident that had befallen the soldier from a short distance; and, while he affected to deplore it, internally congratulated himself on his prudence and foresight. But he was by no means so well satisfied when he saw how it served to benefit the fugitives.

"That unlucky beast!" he exclaimed. "Some fiend must have prompted me to bring her out of the stable. Would she had drowned herself instead of poor Dick Duckesbury, whom she hath sent to feed the fishes! With her aid, Viviana Radcliffe will doubtless escape. No matter: if I secure Father Oldcorne, and that black-visaged trooper in the Spanish garb, who, I'll be sworn, is a secret intelligencer of the Pope, if not of the devil, I shall be well contented. I'll hang them both on a gibbet higher than Haman's."

And muttering other threats to the same effect, he picked his way to the opposite shore. Long before he reached it, the fugitives had disappeared; but on climbing the bank, he beheld them galloping swiftly across a well-wooded district steeped in moonlight, and spread out before his view; and inflamed by the sight, he shouted to his attendants, and once more started in pursuit.

Cheered by the fortunate incident above related, which, in presenting her with her own steed in a manner so surprising and unexpected, seemed almost to give her assurance of deliverance, Viviana, inspirited by the exercise, felt her strength and spirits rapidly revive. At her side rode Guy Fawkes, who ever and anon cast an anxious look behind, to ascertain the distance of their pursuers, but suffered no exclamation to escape his lips. Indeed, throughout the whole affair, he maintained the reserve belonging to his sombre and taciturn character, and neither questioned Humphrey Chetham as to where he was leading them, nor proposed any deviation from the route he had apparently chosen. To such remarks as were addressed to him, Fawkes answered in monosyllables; and it was only when occasion required, that he volunteered any observation or advice. He seemed to surrender himself to chance. And perhaps, if his bosom could have been examined, it would have been found that he considered himself a mere puppet in the hands of destiny.

In other and calmer seasons, he might have dwelt with rapture on the beautiful and varied country through which they were speeding, and which from every knoll they mounted, every slope they descended, every glade they threaded, intricacy pierced, or tangled dell tracked, presented new and increasing attractions. This charming district, since formed into a park by the Traffords, from whom it derives its present designation, was at this time,—though part of the domain of that ancient family,—wholly uninclosed. Old Trafford Hall lies (for it is still in existence) more than a mile nearer to Manchester, a little to the east of Ordsall Hall; but the modern residence of the family is situated in the midst of the lovely region through which the fugitives were riding.

But, though the charms of the scene, heightened by the gentle medium through which they were viewed, produced little effect upon the iron nature of Guy Fawkes, they were not without influence on his companions, especially Viviana. Soothed by the stillness of a

around her, she almost forgot her danger, and surrendering herself to the dreamy enjoyment generally experienced in contemplating such a scene at such an hour, suffered her gaze to wander over the fair woody landscape before her, till it was lost in the distant moonlit wolds.

From the train of thought naturally awakened by this spectacle, she was roused by the shouts of the pursuers; and, glancing timorously behind her, beheld them hurrying swiftly along the valley they had just quitted. From the rapidity with which they were advancing, it was evident they were gaining upon them; and she was about to urge her courser to greater speed, when Humphrey Chetham laid his hand upon the rein to check her.

"Reservé yourself till we gain the brow of this hill," he remarked; "and then put Zayda to her mettle. We are not far from our destination."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Viviana. "Where is it?"

"I will show it to you presently," he answered.

Arrived at the summit of the high ground, which they had been for some time gradually ascending, the young merchant pointed out a vast boggy tract, about two miles off, in the vale beneath them.

"That is our destination," he said.

"Did I not hold it impossible you could trifle with me at such a time as this, I should say you were jesting," rejoined Viviana. "The place you indicate, unless I mistake you, is Chat Moss, the largest and most dangerous marsh in Lancashire."

"You do not mistake me, neither am I jesting, Viviana," replied the young merchant, gravely; "Chat Moss is the mark at which I aim."

"If we are to cross it, we shall need a Will-o'-the-Wisp to guide us, and some friendly elf to make firm the ground beneath our steeds," rejoined Viviana, in a slightly sarcastic tone.

"Trust to me, and you shall traverse it in safety," said Humphrey Chetham.

"I would sooner trust myself to the pursuivant and his band than venture upon its treacherous surface," she replied.

"How is this, young sir?" interposed Guy Fawkes, sternly. "Is it from heedlessness or rashness that you are about to expose us to this new danger?—which, if the young lady judges correctly, and my own experience of such places inclines me to think she does so, is greater than that which now besets us."

"If there is any danger, I shall be the first to encounter it, for I propose to act as your guide," returned Humphrey Chetham, in an offended tone. "But the treacherous character of the marsh constitutes our safety. I am acquainted with a narrow path across it, from which the deviation of a foot will bring certain death. If our pursuers attempt to follow us, their destruction is inevitable. Viviana may rest assured I would not needlessly expose a life so dear as hers. But it is our best chance of safety."

"Master Humphrey Chetham is in the right," observed the priest.

"I have heard of the path he describes; and if he can guide us along it, we shall effectually baffle our enemies."

"I cry you mercy, sir," said Viviana. "I did not apprehend your meaning. But I now thankfully resign myself to your guidance."

"Forward, then," cried the young merchant. And they dashed swiftly down the declivity.

Though now drained, in part cultivated, and traversed by the busiest and most frequented railroad in England, or the world, Chat Moss was, within our own recollection, a dreary and almost impassable waste. Surveyed from the heights of Dunham, whence we have often gazed upon it, envying the plover her wing to skim over its broad expanse, it presented, with its black boggy soil striped like a motley garment with patches of grey, tawny, and dunnish red, a singular and mysterious appearance. Conjecture fixes this morass as the site of a vast forest, whose immemorial and Druid-haunted groves were burnt by the Roman invaders; and seeks to account for its present condition by supposing that the charred trees—still frequently found within its depths, being left where the conflagration had placed them, had choked up its brooks and springs, and so reduced it to a general swamp. Drayton, however, in the *Faerie Land*, placed its origin as far back as the Deluge:—

—— Great Chat Moss at my fall
Lies full of turf and marl, her unctuous mineral;
And blocks as black as pitch, with boring augers found,
There at the General Flood supposed to be drown'd.

But the former hypothesis appears the more probable. A curious description of Chat Moss, as it appeared at the time of this history, is furnished by Camden, who terms it "a swampy tract of great extent, a considerable part of which was carried off in the last age by swollen rivers with great danger, whereby the rivers were infected, and great quantities of fish died. Instead thereof, is now a valley, watered by a small stream; and many trees were discovered thrown down, and lying flat; so that one may suppose, when the ground lay neglected, and the waste water of brooks was not drained off into the open valleys, or their courses stopped by neglect or desolation, all the lower grounds were turned into swamps (which we call *mosses*), or into pools. If this was the case, no wonder so many trees are found covered, and as it were buried, in such places all over England, but especially here. For the roots being loosened by too excessive wet, they must necessarily fall down and sink in so soft a soil. The people hereabouts search for them with poles and spits, and after marking the place, dig them up and use them for firing; for they are like torches, equally fit to burn and to give light, which is probably owing to the bituminous earth that surrounds them, whence the common people suppose them firs, though Cæsar denies there were such trees in Britain."

But, though vast masses of the bog had been carried off by the Irwell and the Mersey, as related by Camden, the general appearance of the waste—with the exception of the valley and the small stream—was much the same as it continued to our own time. Its surface was more broken and irregular; and black gaping chasms, and pits filled with water and slime as dark-coloured as the turf whence it flowed, pointed out the spots where the swollen and heaving swamp had burst its bondage. Narrow paths, known only to the poor turf-cutters and other labourers who dwelt upon its borders, and gathered *fuel with poles and spits in the manner above described, intersected it at various points. But as they led in many cases to dangerous an*

deep gulfs, to dismal quagmires and fathomless pits—and, moreover, as the slightest departure from the proper track would have whelmed the traveller in an oozy bed, from which, as from a quicksand, he would have vainly striven to extricate himself—it was never crossed without a guide, except by those familiar with its perilous courses.

One painful circumstance connected with the history of Chat Moss remains to be recorded, namely, that the attempt made to cultivate it by the great historian Roscoe—an attempt since carried out, as has already been shown, with complete success—ended in a result ruinous to the fortunes of that highly-gifted person, who, up to the period of this luckless undertaking, was as prosperous as he was meritorious.

By this time the fugitives had approached the confines of the marsh. An accident, however, had just occurred which nearly proved fatal to Viviana, and, owing to the delay it occasioned, brought their pursuers into dangerous proximity with them. In fording the Irwell, which, from its devious course, they were again compelled to cross about a quarter of a mile below Barton, her horse missed its footing, and precipitated her into the rapid current. In another instant she would have been borne away, if Guy Fawkes had not flung himself into the water, and seized her before she sank. Her affrighted steed having got out of its depth, began to swim off; and it required the utmost exertion on the part of Humphrey Chetham, embarrassed as he was by the priest, to secure it. In a few minutes all was set to rights, and Viviana was once more placed on the saddle, without having sustained further inconvenience than was occasioned by her dripping apparel. But those few minutes sufficed to bring the pursuivant and his men close upon them; and as they scrambled up the opposite bank, the plunging and shouting behind them told that the latter had entered the stream.

"Yonder is Baysnape," exclaimed Humphrey Chetham, calling Viviana's attention to a ridge of high ground on the borders of the waste. "Below it lies the path by which I propose to enter the moss. We shall speedily be out of the reach of our enemies."

"The marsh at least will hide us," answered Viviana, with a shudder. "It is a terrible alternative."

"Fear nothing, dear daughter," observed the priest. "The saints, who have thus marvellously protected us, will continue to watch over us to the end, and will make the path over yon perilous waste as safe as the ground on which we tread."

"I like not the appearance of the sky," observed Guy Fawkes, looking uneasily upwards. "Before we reach the spot you have pointed out, the moon will be obscured. Will it be safe to traverse the moss in the dark?"

"It is our only chance," replied the young man, speaking in a low tone, that his answer might not reach Viviana's ears; "and, after all, the darkness may be serviceable. Our pursuers are so near, that if it were less gloomy, they might hit upon the right track. And now let us make what haste we can. Every moment is precious."

The dreary and fast darkening waste had now opened upon them in all its horrors. Far as the gaze could reach appeared an immensepanse, flat almost as the surface of the ocean, and unmarked, so far could be discerned in that doubtful light, by any trace of human step or habitation. It was a stern and sombre prospect, calculated

to inspire terror in the stoutest bosom. What effect it produced on Viviana may be easily conjectured. But her nature was brave and enduring, and, though she trembled so violently as scarcely to be able to keep her seat, she gave no utterance to her fears. They were now skirting that part of the morass since denominated, from the unfortunate speculation previously alluded to, "Roscoe's Improvements." This tract was the worst and most dangerous portion of the whole moss. Soft, slabby, and unsubstantial, its treacherous beds scarcely offered secure footing to the heron that alighted on them. The ground shook beneath the fugitives as they hurried past the edge of the groaning and quivering marsh. The clover, scared from its nest, uttered its peculiar and plaintive cry; the bittern boomed; other night-fowl poured forth their doleful notes; and the bull-frog added its deep croak to the ominous concert. Behind them came the thundering tramp and loud shouts of their pursuers. Guy Fawkes had judged correctly. Before they reached Baysnape, the moon had withdrawn behind a rack of clouds, and it had become profoundly dark. Arrived at this point, Humphrey Chetham called to them to turn off to the right.

"Follow singly," he said, "and do not swerve a hair's breadth from the path. The slightest deviation will be fatal. Do you, sir," he added to the priest, "mount behind Guy Fawkes, and let Viviana come next after me. If I should miss my way, do not stir, for your life."

The transfer effected, the fugitives turned off to the right, and proceeded at a cautious pace along a narrow and shaking path. The ground trembled so much beneath them, and their horses' feet sank so deeply in the plashy bog, that Viviana demanded, in a tone of some uneasiness, if he were sure he had taken the right course?

"If I had not," replied Humphrey Chetham, "we should ere this have found our way to the bottom of the morass."

As he spoke, a floundering plunge, accompanied by a horrible and quickly-stifled cry, told that one of their pursuers had perished in endeavouring to follow them.

"The poor wretch is gone to his account," observed Viviana, in a tone of deep commiseration. "Have a care!—have a care, lest you share the same fate."

"If I can save you, I care not what becomes of me," replied the young merchant. "Since I can never hope to possess you, life has become valueless in my eyes."

"Quicken your pace!" shouted Guy Fawkes, who brought up the rear. "Our pursuers have discovered the track, and are making towards us."

"Let them do so," replied the young merchant. "They can do us no further injury."

"That is false!" cried the voice of a soldier from behind; and as the words were uttered a shot was fired, which, though aimed against Chetham, took effect upon his steed. The animal staggered, and his rider had only time to slide from his back when he reeled off the path, and was engulfed in the marsh.
Bearing the plunge of the steed, the man fancied he had hit b

mark, and hallooed in an exulting voice to his companions. But his triumph was of short duration. A ball from the petronel of Guy Fawkes pierced his brain, and dropping from his saddle, he sank, together with his horse, which he dragged along with him, into the quagmire.

"Waste no more shot," cried Humphrey Chetham; "the swamp will fight our battles for us. Though I grieve for the loss of my horse, I may be better able to guide you on foot."

With this, he seized Viviana's bridle, and drew her steed along at a quick pace, but with the greatest caution. As they proceeded, a light like that of a lantern was seen to rise from the earth and approach them.

"Heaven be praised!" exclaimed Viviana: "some one has heard us, and is hastening to our assistance."

"Not so," replied Humphrey Chetham. "The light you behold is an *ignis fatuus*. Were you to trust yourself to its delusive gleam, it would lead you to the most dangerous part of the moss."

And, as if to exhibit its real character, the little flame, which hitherto had burnt as brightly and steadily as a wax candle, suddenly appeared to dilate, and, assuming a purple tinge, emitted a shower of sparks, and then flitted rapidly over the plain.

"Woe to him that follows it!" cried Humphrey Chetham.

"It has a strange unearthly look," observed Viviana, crossing herself. "I have much difficulty in persuading myself it is not the work of some malignant sprite."

"It is only an exhalation of the marsh," replied Chetham. "But see! others are at hand."

Their approach, indeed, seemed to have disturbed all the weird children of the waste. Lights were seen trooping towards them in every direction; sometimes stopping, sometimes rising in the air; now contracting, now expanding, and when within a few yards of the travellers, retreating with inconceivable swiftness.

"It is a marvellous and incomprehensible spectacle," remarked Viviana.

"The common folk hereabouts affirm that these Jack-o'-Lanterns, as they term them, always appear in greater numbers when some direful catastrophe is about to take place," rejoined the young merchant.

"Heaven avert it from us!" ejaculated Viviana.

"It is an idle superstition," returned Chetham. "But we must now keep silence," he continued, lowering his voice, and stopping near the charred stump of a tree, left, it would seem, as a mark. "The road turns here; and, unless our pursuers know it, we shall now quit them for ever. We must not let a sound betray the course we are about to take."

Having turned this dangerous corner in safety, and conducted his companions as noiselessly as possible for a few yards along the cross path, which, being much narrower, was consequently more perilous than the first, Humphrey Chetham stood still, and, imposing silence upon the others, listened to the approach of their pursuers. His prediction was speedily and terribly verified. Hearing the movement in advance, but unable to discover the course taken by the fugitives, the unfortunate soldiers, fearful of losing their prey, quickened their pace.

in the expectation of instantly overtaking them. They were fatally undeceived. Four only of their number, besides their leader, remained—two having perished in the manner heretofore described. The first of these, disregarding the caution of his comrade, laughingly urged his horse into a gallop, and, on passing the mark, sunk as if by magic, and, before he could utter a single warning cry, into the depths of the morass. His disappearance was so instantaneous, that the next in order, though he heard the sullen plunge, was unable to draw in the rein, and was likewise engulfed. A third followed; and a fourth, in his efforts to avoid their fate, backed his steed over the slippery edge of the path. Only one now remained. It was the pursuivant, who, with the prudence that characterised all his proceedings, had followed in the rear. He was so dreadfully frightened, that, adding his shrieks to those of his attendants, he shouted to the fugitives, imploring assistance in the most piteous terms, and promising never again to molest them if they would guide him to a place of safety. But his cries were wholly unheeded; and he perhaps endured in those few minutes of agony as much suffering as he had inflicted on the numerous victims of his barbarity. It was, indeed, an appalling moment. Three of the wretched men had not yet sunk, but were floundering about in the swamp, and shrieking for help. The horses, as much terrified as their riders, added their piercing cries to the half-suffocated yells. And, as if to make the scene more ghastly, myriads of dancing lights flitted towards them, and throwing an unearthly glimmer over this part of the morass, fully revealed their struggling figures. Moved by compassion for the poor wretches, Viviana implored Humphrey Chetham to assist them, and finding him immovable, she appealed to Guy Fawkes.

"They are beyond all human aid," the latter replied.

"Heaven have mercy on their souls!" ejaculated the priest. "Pray for them, dear daughter. Pray heartily, as I am about to pray." And he recited, in an audible voice, the Romish formula of supplication for those in *extremis*.

Averting her gaze from the spectacle, Viviana joined fervently in the prayer.

By this time two of the strugglers had disappeared. The third, having freed himself from his horse, contrived for some moments, during which he uttered the most frightful cries, to keep his head above the swamp. His efforts were tremendous, but unavailing, and served only to accelerate his fate. Making a last desperate plunge towards the bank where the fugitives were standing, he sank above the chin. The expression of his face, shown by the ghastly glimmer of the fen-fires, as he was gradually swallowed up, was horrible.

"*Requiem æternam dona eis, Domine!*" exclaimed the priest.

"All is over," cried Humphrey Chetham, taking the bridle of Viviana's steed, and leading her onwards. "We are free from our pursuers."

"There is one left," she rejoined, casting a look backwards.

"It is the pursuivant," returned Guy Fawkes, sternly. "He is within shot," he added, drawing his petronel.

"Oh, no—no!—in pity spare him!" cried Viviana. "Too many lives have been sacrificed already."

"He is the cause of all the mischief," answered Guy Fawkes, unw

lingly replacing the petronel in his belt, "and may live to injure you and your father."

"I will hope not," rejoined Viviana; "but, spare him!—oh, spare him!"

"Be it as you please," replied Guy Fawkes. "The marsh, I trust, will not be so merciful."

With this, they slowly resumed their progress. On hearing their departure, the pursuivant renewed his cries in a more piteous tone than ever; but, in spite of the entreaties of Viviana, nothing could induce her companions to lend him assistance.

For some time they proceeded in silence, and without accident. As they advanced, the difficulties of the path increased, and it was fortunate that the moon, emerging from the clouds in which up to this moment she had been shrouded, enabled them to steer their course in safety. At length, after a tedious and toilsome march for nearly half a mile, the footing became more secure, the road widened, and they were able to quicken their pace. Another half mile landed them upon the western bank of the morass. Viviana's first impulse was to give thanks to Heaven for their deliverance, nor did she omit a prayer for the unfortunate beings who had perished.

Arrived at the point now known as Rawson Nook, they entered a lane, and proceeded towards Astley Green, where, perceiving a cluster of thatched cottages among the trees, they knocked at the door of the first, and speedily obtained admittance from its inmates, a turf-cutter and his wife. The man conveyed their steeds to a neighbouring barn, while the good dame offered Viviana such accommodation and refreshment as her humble dwelling afforded. Here they tarried till the following evening, as much to recruit the young lady's strength as for security.

At Humphrey Chetham's request, the turf-cutter went in the course of the day to see what had become of the pursuivant. But he accidentally learned from another hind, who followed the same occupation as himself, that a person answering to the officer's description had been seen to emerge from the moss near Baysnape at daybreak, and take the road towards Manchester. Of the unfortunate soldiers nothing but a steel cap and a pike, which the man brought away with him, could be discovered.

After much debate, it was decided that their safest plan would be to proceed to Manchester, where Humphrey Chetham undertook to procure them safe lodgings at the Seven Stars,—an excellent hostel, kept by a worthy widow, who, he affirmed, would do anything to serve him. Accordingly, they set out at nightfall,—Viviana taking her place before Guy Fawkes, and relinquishing Zayda to the young merchant and the priest. Shaping their course through Worsley, by Monton Green and Pendleton, they arrived in about an hour within sight of the town, which then,—not a tithe of its present size, and unpolluted by the smoky atmosphere in which it is now constantly enveloped,—was not without pretensions to a picturesque appearance. Crossing Salford Bridge, they mounted Smithy Bank, as it was then termed, and proceeding along Cateaton-street and Hanging Ditch, struck into Whithing (now Withy) Grove, at the right of which, just where a few houses are beginning to straggle up Shude Hill, stood, and still stands, the

comfortable hostel of the Seven Stars. Here they stopped, and were warmly welcomed by its buxom mistress, Dame Sutcliffe. Muffled in Guy Fawkes's cloak, the priest gained the chamber to which he was ushered unobserved. And Dame Sutcliffe, though her Protestant notions were a little scandalised at her dwelling being made the sanctuary of a Popish priest, promised, at the instance of Master Chetham, whom she knew to be no favourer of idolatry in a general way, to be answerable for his safety.

CHAPTER VI.—DOCTOR DEE.

HAVING seen every attention shown to Viviana by the hostess,—who, as soon as she discovered that she had the daughter of Sir William Radcliffe of Ordsall Hall under her roof, bestowed herself in right earnest for her accommodation,—Humphrey Chetham, notwithstanding the lateness of the hour,—it was past midnight,—expressed his determination to proceed to his residence at Crumpsall, to put an end to any apprehension which might be entertained by the household at his prolonged absence.

With this view, he set forth; and Guy Fawkes, who seemed to be meditating some project which he was unwilling to disclose to the others, quitted the hostel with him, bidding the chamberlain sit up for him, as he should speedily return. They had not gone far when he inquired the nearest way to the collegiate church, and was answered that they were then proceeding towards it, and in a few moments should arrive at its walls. He next asked the young merchant whether he could inform him which part of the churchyard was allotted to criminals. Humphrey Chetham, somewhat surprised by the question, replied, "At the north-west, near the charnel;" adding, "I shall pass within a short distance of the spot, and will point it out to you."

Entering Fennel-street, at the end of which stood an ancient cross, they soon came in sight of the church. The moon was shining brightly, and silvered the massive square tower of the fane, the battlements, pinnacles, buttresses, and noble eastern window, with its gorgeous tracery. While Guy Fawkes paused for a moment to contemplate this reverend and beautiful structure, two venerable personages, having long snowy beards, and wrapped in flowing mantles edged with sable fur, passed the end of the street. One of them carried a lantern, though it was wholly needless, as it was bright as day; and as they glided stealthily along, there was something so mysterious in their manner, that it greatly excited the curiosity of Fawkes, who inquired from his companion if he knew who they were.

"The foremost is the warden of Manchester, the famous Doctor Dee," replied Humphrey Chetham, "divine, mathematician, astrologer,—and, if report speaks truly, conjuror."

"Is that Dr. Dee?" cried Fawkes, in astonishment.

"It is," replied the young merchant; "and the other in the Polish cap is the no less celebrated Edward Kelley, the doctor's assistant, or, as he is ordinarily termed, his seer."

"*They have entered the churchyard,*" remarked Guy Fawkes. "I will follow them."

"I would not advise you to do so," rejoined the other. "Strange tales are told of them. You may witness that it is not safe to look upon."

The caution, however, was unheeded. Guy Fawkes had already disappeared, and the young merchant, shrugging his shoulders, proceeded on his way towards Hunt's Bank.

On gaining the churchyard, Guy Fawkes perceived the warden and his companion creeping stealthily beneath the shadow of a wall in the direction of a low fabric, which appeared to be a bonehouse or charnel, situated at the north-western extremity of the church. Before this building grew a black and stunted yew-tree. Arrived at it, they paused, and looked round to see whether they were observed. They did not, however, notice Guy Fawkes, who had concealed himself behind a buttress. Kelley then unlocked the door of the charnel, and brought out a pickaxe and mattock. Having divested himself of his cloak, he proceeded to shovel out the mould from a new-made grave, at a little distance from the building. Doctor Dee stood by, and held the lantern for his assistant.

Determined to watch their proceedings, Guy Fawkes crept towards the yew-tree, behind which he ensconced himself. Kelley, meanwhile, continued to ply the spade with a vigour that seemed almost incomprehensible in one so far stricken in years as himself, and of such infirm appearance. At length he paused, and kneeling within the shallow grave, endeavoured to drag some object from it. Doctor Dee knelt to assist him. After some exertion, they drew forth the corpse of a female, which had been interred without a coffin, and apparently in the habiliments worn during life.

A horrible suspicion crossed Guy Fawkes. Resolving to satisfy his doubts at once, he rushed forward, and beheld in the ghastly lineaments of the dead the features of the unfortunate prophetess, Elizabeth Orton.

"How now, ye impious violators of the tomb! ye worse than famine-stricken wolves, that rake up the dead in churchyards!" cried Guy Fawkes, in a voice of thunder, to Doctor Dee and his companion; who, startled by his sudden appearance, dropped the body, and retreated to a short distance. "What devilish rites are ye about to enact that ye thus profane the sanctity of the grave?"

"And who art thou that darest thus to interrupt us?" demanded Dee, sternly.

"It matters not," rejoined Fawkes, striding towards them. "Suffice it you are both known to me. You, John Dee, warden of Manchester, who deserve to be burnt at the stake for your damnable practices, rather than hold the sacred office you fill; and you, Edward Kelley, his associate, who boast of familiar intercourse with demons, and, unless fame belies you, have purchased the intimacy at the price of your soul's salvation. I know you both. I know, also, whose body you have disinterred,—it is that of the ill-fated prophetess, Elizabeth Orton. And, if you do not instantly restore it to the grave whence you have snatched it, I will denounce you to the authorities of the town."

"Knowing thus much, you should know still more," retorted Doctor Dee, "namely, that I am not to be lightly provoked. You have no power to quit the churchyard—nay, not so much as to move a limb, without my permission."

As he spoke, he drew from beneath his cloak a small phial, the contents of which he sprinkled over the intruder. Its effect was wonderful and instantaneous. The limbs of Guy Fawkes stiffened where he stood. His hand remained immovably fixed upon the pommel of his sword, and he seemed transformed into a marble statue.

"You will henceforth acknowledge and respect my power," Dee continued. "Were it my pleasure, I could bury you twenty fathoms deep in the earth beneath our feet; or, by invoking certain spirits, convey you to the summit of yon lofty tower," pointing to the church, "and hurl you from it headlong. But I content myself with depriving you of motion, and leave you in possession of sight and speech, that you may endure the torture of witnessing what you cannot prevent."

So saying, he was about to return to the corpse with Kelley, when Guy Fawkes exclaimed in a hollow voice,—

"Set me free, and I will instantly depart."

"Will you swear never to divulge what you have seen?" demanded Dee, pausing.

"Solemnly," he replied.

"I will trust you then," rejoined the doctor;—"the rather, that your presence interferes with my purpose."

Taking a handful of loose earth from an adjoining grave, and muttering a few words that sounded like a charm, he scattered it over Fawkes. The spell was instantly broken. A leaden weight seemed to be removed from his limbs. His joints regained their suppleness, and with a convulsive start, like that by which a dreamer casts off a nightmare, he was liberated from his preternatural thralldom.

"And now, begone!" cried Doctor Dee, authoritatively.

"Suffer me to tarry with you a few moments," said Guy Fawkes, in a deferential tone. "Heretofore, I will freely admit, I regarded you as an impostor; but now I am convinced you are deeply skilled in the occult sciences, and would fain consult you on the future."

"I have already said that your presence troubles me," replied Doctor Dee. "But if you will call upon me at the college to-morrow, it may be I will give you further proofs of my skill."

"Why not now, reverend sir?" urged Fawkes. "The question I would ask is better suited to this dismal spot and witching hour, than to daylight and the walls of your study."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Dee. "Your name?"

"Guy Fawkes," replied the other.

"Guy Fawkes!" echoed the doctor, starting. "Nay, then, I guess the nature of the question you would ask."

"Am I then known to you, reverend sir?" inquired Fawkes, uneasily.

"As well as to yourself—nay, better," answered the doctor. "Bring the lantern hither, Kelley," he continued, addressing his companion.

"Look!" he added, elevating the light so as to throw it upon the countenance of Fawkes: "it is the very face—the bronzed and strongly-marked features—the fierce black eye—the iron frame and foreign garb of the figure we beheld in the Show Stone."

"It is," replied Kelley. "I could have singled him out amid a thousand. He looked thus as we tracked his perilous course, with his three companions, the priest, Chetham, and Viviana Radcliffe, across that Moss."

"How have you learned this?" cried Guy Fawkes, in amazement.

"By the art that reveals all things," answered Kelley.

"In proof that your thoughts are known to me," observed Dee, "I will tell you the inquiry you would make before it is uttered. You would learn whether the enterprise on which you are engaged will succeed."

"I would," replied Fawkes.

"Yet more," continued Dee. "I am aware of the nature of the plot, and could name to you all connected with it."

"Your power is indeed wonderful," rejoined Fawkes, in an altered tone. "But will you give me the information I require?"

"Hum!" muttered Dee.

"I am too poor to purchase it," proceeded Fawkes, "unless a relic I brought from Spain has any value in your eyes."

"Tush!" exclaimed Dee, angrily. "Do you suppose I am a common juggler, and practise my art for gain?"

"By no means, reverend sir," said Fawkes. "But I would not willingly put you to trouble without evincing my gratitude."

"Well, then," replied Dee, "I will not refuse your request. And yet I would caution you to beware how you pry into the future. You may repent your rashness when it is too late."

"I have no fear," rejoined Fawkes. "Let me know the worst."

"Enough," answered Dee. "And now listen to me. That carcase having been placed in the ground without the holy rites of burial being duly performed, I have power over it. And, as the witch of Endor called up Samuel, as is recorded in Holy Writ,—as Erichtho raised up a corpse to reveal to Sextus Pompeius the event of the Pharsalian war,—as Elisha breathed life into the nostrils of the Shunamite's son,—as Alcestis was invoked by Hercules,—and as the dead maid was brought back to life by Apollonius Thyaneus,—so I, by certain powerful incantations, will allure the soul of the prophetess, for a short space, to its former tenement, and compel it to answer my questions. Dare you be present at the ceremony?"

"I dare," replied Fawkes.

"Follow me, then," said Dee. "You will need all your courage."

Muttering a hasty prayer, and secretly crossing himself, Guy Fawkes strode after him towards the grave. By the doctor's directions, he, with some reluctance, assisted Kelley to raise the corpse, and convey it to the charnel. Dee followed, bearing the lantern, and, on entering the building, closed and fastened the door.

The chamber in which Guy Fawkes found himself was in perfect keeping with the horrible ceremonial about to be performed. In one corner lay a mouldering heap of skulls, bones, and other fragments of mortality; in the other, a pile of broken coffins, emptied of their tenants, and reared on end. But what chiefly attracted his attention, was a ghastly collection of human limbs, blackened with pitch, girded round with iron hoops, and hung, like meat in a shambles, against the wall. There were two heads, and, though the features were scarcely distinguishable, owing to the liquid in which they had been immersed, *they still retained a terrific expression of agony.* Seeing his attention directed to these revolting objects, Kelley informed him they were the *quarters of the two priests who had recently been put to death, which had been left there previously to being placed on the church-gates.*

The implements, and some part of the attire used by the executioner in his butcherly office, were scattered about, and mixed with the tools of the sexton; while in the centre of the room stood a large wooden frame supported by tressels. On this frame, stained with blood and smeared with pitch, showing the purpose to which it had been recently put, the body was placed. This done, Doctor Dee set down the lantern beside it; and, as the light fell upon its livid features, sullied with earth, and exhibiting traces of decay, Guy Fawkes was so appalled by the sight that he half repented of what he had undertaken.

Noticing his irresolution, Doctor Dee said, "You may yet retire if you think proper."

"No," replied Fawkes, rousing himself; "I will go through with it."

Dee then extinguished the light.

An awful silence now ensued, broken only by a low murmur from Doctor Dee, who appeared to be reciting an incantation. As he proceeded, his tones became louder, and his accents those of command. Suddenly he paused, and seemed to await a response. But, as none was made, greatly to the disappointment of Guy Fawkes, whose curiosity, notwithstanding his fears, was raised to the highest pitch, he cried, "Blood is wanting to complete the charm."

"If that is all, I will speedily supply the deficiency," replied Guy Fawkes. And, drawing his rapier, he bared his left arm, and pricked it with the point of the weapon. "I bleed now," he cried.

"Sprinkle the corpse with the ruddy current," rejoined Doctor Dee.

"Your commands are obeyed," replied Fawkes. "I have placed my hand on its breast, and the blood is flowing upon it."

Upon this the doctor began to mutter an incantation in a louder and more authoritative tone than before. Presently Kelley added his voice, and they both joined in a sort of chorus, but in a jargon wholly unintelligible to Guy Fawkes.

All at once a blue flame appeared above their heads, and, slowly descending, settled upon the brow of the corpse, lighting up the sunken cavities of the eyes, and the discoloured and distorted features.

"The charm works!" shouted Doctor Dee.

"She moves! she moves!" exclaimed Guy Fawkes. "She is alive!"

"Take off your hand," cried the doctor, "or mischief may ensue." And he again continued his incantation.

"Down on your knees!" he exclaimed at length, in a terrible voice.

"The spirit is at hand."

There was a rushing sound, and a stream of dazzling lightning shot down upon the corpse, which emitted a hollow groan. In obedience to the doctor's commands, Guy Fawkes had prostrated himself on the ground; but he kept his gaze steadily fixed on the body, which, to his infinite astonishment, slowly arose, until it stood erect upon the frame. There it remained perfectly motionless, with the arms close to the sides, and the habiliments torn and dishevelled. The blue light still retained its position upon the brow, and communicated a horrible glimmer to the features. The spectacle was so dreadful that Guy Fawkes would fain have averted his eyes, but he was unable to do so. Doctor Dee and his companion, meanwhile, continued their invocations until, as it seemed to Fawkes, the lips of the corpse moved, and a awful voice exclaimed, "Why have you called me?"

"Daughter!" replied Doctor Dee, rising, "in life thou wert endowed with the gift of prophecy. In the grave, that which is to come must be revealed to thee. We would question thee."

"Speak and I will answer," replied the corpse.

"Interrogate her, my son," said Dee, addressing Fawkes, "and be brief, for the time is short. So long only as that flame burns I have power over her."

"Spirit of Elizabeth Orton," cried Guy Fawkes, "if indeed thou standest before me, and some demon hath not entered thy frame to delude me,—by all that is holy, and by every blessed saint, I adjure thee to tell me whether the scheme on which I am now engaged for the advantage of the Catholic Church will prosper?"

"Thou art mistaken, Guy Fawkes," returned the corpse. "Thy scheme is not for the advantage of the Catholic Church."

"I will not pause to inquire wherefore," continued Fawkes. "But grant that the means are violent and wrongful, will the end be successful?"

"The end will be death," replied the corpse.

"To the tyrant—to the oppressors?" demanded Fawkes.

"To the conspirators," was the answer.

"Ha!" ejaculated Fawkes.

"Proceed, if you have aught more to ask," cried Doctor Dee. "The flame is expiring."

"Shall we restore the fallen religion?" demanded Fawkes.

But before the words could be pronounced the light vanished, and a heavy sound was heard, as of the body falling on the frame.

"It is over," said Doctor Dee.

"Can you not summon her again?" asked Fawkes, in a tone of deep disappointment. "I had other questions to ask."

"Impossible!" replied the doctor. "The spirit is fled, and will not be recalled. We must now commit the body to the earth. And this time it shall be more decently interred."

"My curiosity is roused,—not satisfied," said Guy Fawkes. "Would it were to occur again!"

"It is ever thus," replied Dr. Dee. "We seek to know that which is interdicted,—and quench our thirst at a fountain that only inflames our curiosity the more. Be warned, my son. You are embarked on a perilous enterprise, and if you pursue it, it will lead you to certain destruction."

"I cannot retreat," rejoined Fawkes, "and would not, if I could. I am bound by an oath too terrible to be broken."

"I will absolve you of your oath, my son," said Dr. Dee, eagerly.

"You cannot, reverend sir," replied Fawkes. "By no sophistry could I clear my conscience of the ties imposed upon it. I have sworn never to desist from the execution of this scheme, unless those engaged in it shall give me leave. Nay, so resolved am I, that if I stood alone I would go on."

As he spoke a deep groan issued from the corpse.

"You are again warned, my son," said Dee.

"Come forth," said Guy Fawkes, rushing towards the door, and throwing it open. "This place stifles me."

The night has already been described as bright and beautiful. Be-

fore him stood the collegiate church, bathed in moonlight. He gazed abstractedly at this venerable structure for a few moments, and then returned to the charnel, where he found Doctor Dee and Kelley employed in placing the body of the prophetess in a coffin, which they had taken from a pile in the corner. He immediately proffered his assistance, and in a short space the task was completed. The coffin was then borne towards the grave, at the edge of which it was laid while the burial-service was recited by Doctor Dee. This ended, it was lowered into its shallow resting-place, and speedily covered with earth.

When all was ready for their departure, the doctor turned to Fawkes, and, bidding him farewell, observed,

"If you are wise, my son, you will profit by the awful warning you have this night received."

"Before we part, reverend sir," replied Fawkes, "I would ask if you know of other means whereby an insight may be obtained into the future?"

"Many, my son," replied Dee. "I have a magic glass, in which, with due preparation, you may behold exact representations of coming events. I am now returning to the college, and if you will accompany me, I will show it to you."

The offer was eagerly accepted, and the party quitted the church-yard.

CHAPTER VII.—THE MAGIC GLASS.

THE old College of Manchester occupied, as is well known, the site of the existing structure, called after the benevolent individual by whom that admirable charity was founded, and whom we have ventured to introduce in this history,—the Chetham Hospital. Much, indeed, of the ancient building remains; for though it was considerably repaired and enlarged, being "very ruinous and in great decay," at the time of its purchase in 1654, by the feoffees under Humphrey Chetham's will, from the sequestrators of the Earl of Derby's estates, still the general character of the fabric has been preserved, and several of its chambers retained. Originally built on the foundation of a manor-house denominated the Baron's Hall—the abode of the Grelleys and the De la Warra, lords of Manchester—the college continued to be used as the residence of the warden and fellows of the collegiate church until the reign of Edward I., when that body was dissolved. On the accession, however, of Mary, the college was re-established; but the residence of the ecclesiastical body being removed to a house in Deansgate, the building was allowed to become extremely dilapidated, and was used partly as a prison for recusants and other offenders, and partly as a magazine for powder. In this state Doctor Dee found it when he succeeded to the wardenship in 1595, and preferring it, notwithstanding its ruinous condition, to the house appointed for him elsewhere, took up his abode within it.

Situated on a high rock overhanging the River Irk—at that time a clear stream, remarkable for the excellence of its fish—and constructed entirely of stone, the old college had then, and still has to a certain extent, a venerable and monastic appearance. During Dee's occupatio

of it, it became a sort of weird abode in the eyes of the vulgar, and many a timorous look was cast at it by those who walked at eventide on the opposite bank of the Irk. Sometimes the curiosity of the watchers was rewarded by beholding a few sparks issue from the chimney, and now and then the red reflection of a fire might be discerned through the window. But, generally, nothing could be perceived, and the building seemed as dark and mysterious as its occupant.

One night, however, a loud explosion took place,—so loud, indeed, that it shook the whole pile to its foundation, dislodged one or two of the chimneys, and overthrew an old wall, the stones of which rolled into the river beneath. Alarmed by the concussion, the inhabitants of Hunt's Bank rushed forth, and saw, to their great alarm, that the wing of the college occupied by Doctor Dee was in flames. Though many of them attributed the circumstance to supernatural agency, and were fully persuaded that the enemy of mankind was at that instant bearing off the conjuror and his assistant, and refused to interfere to stop the conflagration; others, more humane and less superstitious, hastened to lend their aid to extinguish the flames. On reaching the college, they could scarcely credit their senses on finding that there was no appearance of fire; and they were met by the doctor and his companion at the gates, who informed them that their presence was unnecessary, as all danger was over. From that night Doctor Dee's reputation as a wizard was firmly established.

At the period of this history, Doctor Dee was fast verging on eighty, having passed a long life in severe and abstruse study. He had travelled much, had visited most of the foreign courts, where he was generally well received, and was profoundly versed in mathematics, astronomy, the then popular science of judicial astrology, and other occult learning. So accurate were his calculations esteemed, that he was universally consulted as an oracle. For some time he resided in Germany, whither he was invited by the Emperor Charles V., and retained by his brother and successor, Ferdinando. He next went to Louvain, where his reputation had preceded him; and from thence to Paris, where he lectured at the schools on geometry, and was offered a professorship of the university, but declined it. On his return to England in 1551, he was appointed one of the instructors of the youthful monarch Edward VI., who presented him with an annual pension of 100 marks. This he was permitted to commute for the rectory of Upton-on-Severn, which he retained until the accession of Mary, when being charged with devising her majesty's destruction by enchantments,—certain waxen images of the queen having been found within his abode,—he was thrown into prison, rigorously treated, and kept in durance for a long period, but at length, from want of sufficient proof against him, he was liberated.

Dee shared the common fate of all astrologers: he was alternately honoured and disgraced. His next patron was Lord Robert Dudley (afterwards the celebrated Earl of Leicester), who, it is well known, was a firm believer in the superstitious arts to which Dee was addicted, and by whom he was employed, on the accession of Elizabeth, *to erect a scheme to ascertain the best day for her coronation. His prediction was so fortunate that it procured him the favour of the queen, from whom he received many marks of regard.* As it is not

needful to follow him through his various wanderings, it may be sufficient to mention, that in 1564 he proceeded to Germany on a visit to the Emperor Maximilian, to whom he dedicated his "*Monas Hieroglyphica*;" that in 1571 he fell grievously sick in Lorraine, whither two physicians were despatched to his aid by Elizabeth; and that, on his recovery, he returned to his own country and retired to Mortlake, where he gathered together a vast library, comprising the rarest and most curious works on all sciences, together with a large collection of manuscripts.

While thus living in retirement, he was sought out by Edward Kelley, a native of Worcestershire, who represented himself as in possession of an old book of magic, containing forms of invocation, by which spirits might be summoned and controlled, as well as a ball of ivory, found in the tomb of a bishop who had made great progress in hermetic philosophy, which was filled with the powder of projection. These treasures Kelley offered to place in the hands of the doctor on certain conditions, which were immediately acquiesced in, and thenceforth Kelley became a constant inmate in his house, and an assistant in all his practices. Shortly afterwards they were joined by a Polish nobleman, Albert de Laski (frequently called Alasco), Palatine of Suabia, whom they accompanied to Prague, at the instance of the Emperor Rodolph II., who desired to be initiated into their mysteries. Their reception at this court was not such as to induce a long sojourn at it; and Dee having been warned by his familiar spirits to sell his effects and depart, complied with the intimation, and removed to Poland. The same fate attended him here. The nuncio of the Pope denounced him as a sorcerer, and demanded that he should be delivered up to the Inquisition. This was refused by the monarch; but Dee and his companion were banished from his dominions, and compelled to fly to Bohemia, where they took refuge in the Castle of Trebona, belonging to Count Rosenberg. Shortly afterwards, Dee and Kelley separated, the magical instruments being delivered to the former, who bent his course homewards; and on his arrival in London was warmly welcomed by the queen. During his absence, his house at Mortlake had been broken open by the populace, under the pretence of its being the abode of a wizard, and rifled of its valuable library and manuscripts—a loss severely felt by its owner. Some years were now passed by Dee in great destitution, during which he prosecuted his studies with the same ardour as before, until at length, in 1595, when he was turned seventy, fortune again smiled upon him, and he was appointed to the wardenship of the college at Manchester, whither he repaired, and was installed in great pomp.

But his residence in this place was not destined to be tranquil. His reputation as a dealer in the black art had preceded him, and rendered him obnoxious to the clergy, with whom he had constant disputes, and a feud subsisted between him and the fellows of his church. It has already been mentioned that he refused to occupy the house allotted him, but preferred taking up his quarters in the old dilapidated college. Various reasons were assigned by his enemies for this singular choice of abode. They affirmed—and with some reason—that he selected it because he desired to elude observation; and that his mode of life, sufficiently improper in a layman, was altogether indecorous in

an ecclesiastic. By the common people he was universally regarded as a conjuror—and many at first came to consult him in that capacity, but he peremptorily dismissed all such applicants; and when seven females, supposed to be possessed, were brought to him that he might exercise his power over the evil spirits, he refused to interfere. He also publicly examined and rebuked a juggler, named Hartley, who pretended to magical knowledge. But these things did not blind his enemies, who continued to harass him to such a degree, that he addressed a petition to James the First, entreating to be brought to trial, when the accusations preferred against him might be fully investigated, and his character cleared. The application, and another, to the like effect, addressed to parliament, were disregarded. Dee had not been long established in Manchester when he was secretly joined by Kelley, and they recommenced their search after the grand secret—passing the nights in making various alchymical experiments, or in fancied conferences with invisible beings.

Among other magical articles possessed by Doctor Dee was a large globe of crystal, which he termed the Holy Stone, because he believed it had been brought him by “angelical ministry;” and “in which,” according to Meric Casaubon, “and out of which, by persons qualified for it, and admitted to the sight of it, all shapes and figures mentioned in every action were seen, and voices heard.” The same writer informs us it was “round-shaped, of a pretty bigness, and most like unto crystal.” Dee himself declared to the Emperor Rodolph, “that the spirits had brought him a stone of that value that no earthly kingdom was of such worthiness as to be compared to the virtue and dignity thereof.” He was in the habit of daily consulting this marvellous stone, and recording the visions he saw therein, and the conferences he held through it with the invisible world.

Followed by Guy Fawkes and Kelley, the doctor took his way down Long Mill Gate, and stopping at an arched gateway on the left, near which, on the site of the modern structure, stood the public school, founded a century before by Hugh Oldham, Bishop of Exeter,—he unlocked a small wicket and entered a spacious court, surrounded on one side by high stone walls, and on the other by a wing of the college.

Conducting his guest to the principal entrance of the building, which lay at the further end of the court, Doctor Dee ushered him into a large chamber, panelled with oak, and having a curiously-moulded ceiling ornamented with grotesque sculpture. This room, still in existence, and now occupied by the master of the school, formed Doctor Dee's library. Offering Fawkes a chair, the doctor informed him that when all was ready, Kelley should summon him; and, accompanied by his assistant, he withdrew. Half an hour elapsed before Kelley returned. Motioning Guy Fawkes to follow him, he led the way through several intricate passages to a chamber which was evidently the magician's sacred retreat. In a recess on one side stood a table, covered with cabalistic characters and figures, referring to the *celestial influences*. On it was placed the Holy Stone, diffusing such a *glistening radiance as is emitted by the pebble called cat's-eye*. On the *floor a wide circle was described, in the rings of which magical characters, resembling those on the table, were traced*. In front stood a brasier

filled with flaming coals; and before it hung a heavy black curtain, appearing to shroud some mystery from view.

Desiring Fawkes to place himself in the centre of the circle, Doctor Dee took several ingredients from a basket handed him by Kelley, and cast them into the brasier. As each herb or gum was ignited, the flame changed its colour; now becoming crimson, now green, now blue, while fragrant or noxious odours loaded the atmosphere. These suffumigations ended, Dee seated himself on a chair near the table, whither he was followed by Kelley; and commanding Fawkes not to move a footstep, as he valued his safety, he waved his wand, and began in a solemn tone to utter an invocation. As he continued, a hollow noise was heard overhead; which gradually increased in loudness, until it appeared as if the walls were tumbling about their ears.

"The spirits are at hand!" cried Dee. "Do not look behind you, or they will tear you in pieces."

As he spoke, a horrible din was heard, as of mingled howling, shrieking, and laughter. It was succeeded by a low faint strain of music, which gradually died away, and then all was silent.

"All is prepared," cried Dee. "Now, what would you behold?"

"The progress of the great enterprise," replied Fawkes.

Doctor Dee waved his wand. The curtains slowly unfolded, and Guy Fawkes perceived as in a glass a group of dark figures; amongst which he noticed one in all respects resembling himself. A priest was apparently proposing an oath, which the others were uttering.

"Do you recognise them?" said Doctor Dee.

"Perfectly," replied Fawkes.

"Look again," said Dee.

As he spoke, the figures melted away, and a new scene was presented on the glass. It was a gloomy vault, filled with barrels, partly covered with fagots and billets of wood.

"Have you seen enough?" demanded Dee.

"No," replied Fawkes, firmly. "I have seen what is passed. I would behold that which is to come."

"Look again, then," rejoined the doctor, waving his wand.

For an instant the glass was darkened, and nothing could be discerned except the lurid flame and thick smoke arising from the brasier. The next moment an icy chill shot through the frame of Guy Fawkes as he beheld a throng of skeletons arranged before him. The bony fingers of the foremost of the grisly assemblage were pointed towards an indistinct object at its feet. As this object gradually became more defined, Guy Fawkes perceived that it was a figure resembling himself stretched upon the wheel, and writhing in the agonies of torture. He uttered an exclamation of terror, and the curtains were instantly closed. Half an hour afterwards, Guy Fawkes quitted the college, and returned to the Seven Stars.

CHAPTER VIII.—THE PRISON ON SALFORD BRIDGE.

On the following morning, Guy Fawkes had a long and private conference with Father Oldcorne. The priest appeared greatly troubled by the communication made to him, and his uneasiness was not with

ont effect on Viviana Radcliffe, who ventured at last to inquire whether he apprehended any new danger.

"I scarcely know what I apprehend, dear daughter," he answered; "but circumstances have occurred which render it impossible we can remain longer in our present asylum with safety. We must quit it at nightfall."

"Is our retreat then discovered?" inquired Viviana, in alarm.

"Not as yet, I trust," replied Oldcorne; "but I have just ascertained from a messenger that the pursuivant, who, we thought, had departed for Chester, is still lingering within the town. He has offered a large reward for my apprehension, and having traced us to Manchester, declares he will leave no house unsearched till he finds us. He has got together a fresh band of soldiers, and is now visiting every place he thinks likely to afford us shelter."

"If this is the case," rejoined Viviana, "why remain here a single moment?"

"Flight would avail nothing,—or rather, it would expose us to fresh risk, dear daughter," replied Oldcorne. "Every approach to the town is guarded, and soldiers are posted at the corners of the streets, who stop and examine each suspected person. Nor is this all. By some inexplicable and mysterious means, the designs of certain of the most assured friends of the Catholic cause have come to the knowledge of our enemies, and the lives and safety of many worthy men will be endangered; amongst others, that of your father."

"You terrify me!" cried Viviana.

"The rack shall force nothing from me, father," said Fawkes, sternly.

"Nor from me, my son," rejoined Oldcorne. "I have that within which will enable me to sustain the bitterest agonies that the persecutors of our church can inflict."

"Nor shall the rack force aught from me," added Viviana. "For though you have trusted me with nothing to implicate others, I plainly perceive a plot is in agitation for the restoration of our religion, and I more than suspect Mr. Catesby to be its chief contriver."

"Daughter!" exclaimed Oldcorne, uneasily.

"Fear nothing, father," she rejoined. "As I have said, the rack shall not force me to betray you. Neither should it keep me silent when I feel that my counsel—such as it is—may avail you. The course you are pursuing is dangerous and fatal,—dangerous to yourselves, and fatal to the cause you would serve. Do not deceive yourselves. You are struggling hopelessly and unrighteously, and Heaven will never assist an undertaking which has its aim in the terrible waste of life you meditate."

Father Oldcorne made no reply, but walked apart with Guy Fawkes; and Viviana abandoned herself to sorrowful reflection.

Shortly after this, the door was suddenly thrown open, and Humphrey Chetham rushed into the room. His looks were full of apprehension, and Viviana was at no loss to perceive that calamity was at hand.

"What is the matter?" she cried, rising.

"The pursuivant and his men are below," he replied. "They are interrogating the hostess, and are about to search the house. I imagined to pass them unperceived."

"We will resist them to the last," said Guy Fawkes, drawing a petronel.

"Resistance will be in vain," rejoined Humphrey Chetham. "They more than treble our number."

"Is there no means of escape?" asked Viviana.

"None whatever," replied Chetham. "I hear them on the stairs. The terrified hostess has not dared to deny you, and is conducting them hither."

"Stand back!" cried Guy Fawkes, striding towards the door, and let me alone confront them. That accursed pursuivant has escaped me once, but he shall not do so a second time."

"My son," said Oldcorne, advancing towards him, "preserve yourself if possible. Your life is of consequence to the great cause. Think not of us—think not of revenging yourself upon this caitiff—but think of the high destiny for which you are reserved. That window offers a means of retreat. Avail yourself of it. Fly!—fly!"

"Ay, fly!" repeated Viviana. "And you, Humphrey Chetham—your presence here can do no good. Quick!—they come!"

"Nothing should induce me to quit you at such a moment, Viviana," replied Chetham, "but the conviction that I may be able to liberate you should these miscreants convey you to prison."

"Fly!—fly, my son!" cried Oldcorne. "They are at the door."

Thus urged, Guy Fawkes reluctantly yielded to Oldcorne's entreaties, and sprang through the window. He was followed by Chetham. Viviana darted to the casement, and saw that they had alighted in safety on the ground, and were flying swiftly up Shude Hill. Meanwhile the pursuivant had reached the door, which Chetham had taken the precaution to fasten, and was trying to burst it open. The bolts offered but a feeble resistance to his fury, and the next moment he dashed into the room at the head of a band of soldiers.

"Seize them!" he cried. "Ha!" he added, glancing round the room with a look of disappointment, "where are the others? Where is the soldier in the Spanish garb? Where is Humphrey Chetham? Confess at once, dog!" he continued, seizing the priest by the throat, "or I will pluck the secret from your breast."

"Do not harm him," interposed Viviana. "I will answer the question. They are fled."

"Fled!" echoed the pursuivant, in consternation. "How?"

"Through that window," replied Viviana.

"After them!" cried the pursuivant to some of his attendants.

"Take the soldier, dead or alive! And now," he continued, as his orders were obeyed, "you, Father Oldcorne, Jesuit and traitor, and you, Viviana Radcliffe, his shelterer and abettor, I shall convey you both to the prison on Salford Bridge. Seize them and bring them along."

"Touch me not," rejoined Viviana, pushing the men aside, who rudely advanced to obey their leader's command. "You have no warrant for this brutality. I am ready to attend you. Take my arm, father."

Abashed at this reproof, the pursuivant stalked out of the room. Surrounded by the soldiers, Viviana and the priest followed. The procession was attended by crowds to the very door of the prison, where, by the pursuivant's command, they were locked in separate cells.

The cell in which Viviana was confined was a small chamber at the back of the prison, and on the upper story. It had a small grated window overlooking the river. It has already been mentioned that this prison was originally a chapel, built in the reign of Edward the Third, and had only recently been converted into a place of security for recusants. The chamber allotted to Viviana was contrived in the roof, and was so low that she could scarcely stand upright in it. It was furnished with a chair, a small table, and a straw pallet.

The hours passed wearily with Viviana as they were marked by the deep-toned clock of the collegiate church, the lofty tower of which fronted her window. Oppressed by the most melancholy reflections, she was for some time a prey almost to despair. On whatever side she looked, the prospect was equally cheerless, and her sole desire was to find a refuge from her cares in the seclusion of a convent. For this she prayed; and she prayed also that Heaven would soften the hearts of her oppressors, and enable those who suffered to endure their yoke with patience. In the evening provisions were brought her, and placed upon the table, together with a lamp, by a surly-looking gaoler. But Viviana had no inclination to eat, and left them untouched. Neither could she prevail upon herself to lie down on the wretched pallet.

After some hours of watchfulness, her eyelids closed, and she continued to slumber until aroused by a slight noise at the window. Starting at the sound, she flew towards it, and perceived in the gloom the face of a man. She would have uttered a loud cry, when the circumstances of her situation rushed to her mind, and the possibility that it might be a friend checked her. The next moment satisfied her she had acted rightly. A voice, which she recognised as that of Humphrey Chetham, called to her by name in a low tone, bidding her fear nothing, as he was come to set her free.

"How have you managed to reach the window?" asked Viviana.

"By a rope ladder," he answered. "I contrived in the darkness to clamber upon the roof of the prison from the parapets of the bridge, and, after securing the ladder to a projection, dropped the other end into a boat, rowed by Guy Fawkes, and concealed beneath the arches of the bridge. If I can remove this bar so as to allow you to pass through the window, dare you descend the ladder?"

"No," replied Viviana, shuddering. "My brain reels at the mere idea."

"Think of the fate you will escape," urged Chetham.

"And what will become of Father Oldcorne?" asked Viviana. "Where is he?"

"In the cell immediately beneath you," replied Chetham.

"Can you not liberate him?" she continued.

"Assuredly, if he will risk the descent," answered Chetham, reluctantly.

"Free him first," rejoined Viviana, "and at all hazards I will accompany you."

The young merchant made no reply, but disappeared from the window. Viviana strained her gaze downwards, but it was too dark to allow her to see anything. She, however, heard a grating noise, like that occasioned by a file; and shortly afterwards a few muttered words informed her that the priest was passing through the window. The

cords of the ladder shook against the bars of her window, and she held her breath for fear. From this state of suspense she was relieved in a few minutes by Humphrey Chetham, who informed her that Oldcorne had descended in safety, and was in the boat with Guy Fawkes.

"I will fulfil my promise," replied Viviana, trembling; "but I fear my strength will fail me."

"You had better find death below than tarry here," replied Humphrey Chetham, who, as he spoke, was rapidly filing through the iron bar. "In a few minutes this impediment will be removed."

The young merchant worked hard, and in a short time the stout bar yielded to his efforts.

"Now, then," he cried, springing into the room, "you are free!"

"I dare not make the attempt," said Viviana; "my strength utterly fails me."

"Nay, then," he replied; "I will take the risk upon myself. You must not remain here."

So saying, he caught her in his arms, and bore her through the window.

With some difficulty, and no little risk, he succeeded in gaining a footing on the ladder. This accomplished, he began slowly to descend. When half way down, he found he had overrated his strength, and he feared he should be compelled to quit his hold: but, nerved by his passion, he held on, and making a desperate effort, completed the descent in safety.

CHAPTER IX.—THE FATE OF THE PURSUIVANT.

Assisted by the stream, and plying his oars with great rapidity, Guy Fawkes soon left the town far behind him; nor did he relax his exertions until checked by Humphrey Chetham. He then ceased rowing, and directed the boat towards the left bank of the river.

"Here we propose to land," observed the young merchant to Viviana. "We are not more than a hundred yards from Ordsall Cave, where you can take refuge for a short time, while I proceed to the hall, and ascertain whether you can return to it with safety."

"I place myself entirely in your hands," she replied; "but I fear such a course will be to rush into the very face of danger. Oh, that I could join my father at Holywell! With him I should feel secure."

"Means may be found to effect your wishes," returned Humphrey Chetham; "but after the suffering you have recently endured, it will scarcely be prudent to undertake so long a journey without a few hours' repose. To-morrow—or the next day—you may set out."

"I am fully equal to it now," rejoined Viviana, eagerly; "and any fatigue I may undergo will not equal my present anxiety. You have already done so much for me, that I venture to presume still further upon your kindness. Provide some means of conveyance for me and my father Oldcorne to Chester, and I shall for ever be beholden to you."

"I will not only do what you desire, Viviana, if it be possible," answered Chetham, "but, if you will allow me, I will serve as your escort."

"And I, also," added Guy Fawkes.

"All I fear is, that your strength may fail you," continued the young merchant, in a tone of uneasiness.

"Fear nothing, then," replied Viviana. "I am made of firmer material than you imagine. Think only of what *you* can do, and doubt not my ability to act in like manner."

"I ever deemed you of a courageous nature, daughter," observed Oldcorne; "but your resolution surpasses my belief."

By this time the boat had approached the shore. Leaping upon the rocky bank, the young merchant assisted Viviana to land, and then performed the same service for the priest. Guy Fawkes was the last to disembark; and, having pulled the skiff aground, he followed the others, who waited for him at a short distance. The night was profoundly dark, and the path they had taken, being shaded by large trees, was scarcely discernible. Carefully guiding Viviana, who leaned on him for support, the young merchant proceeded at a slow pace, and with the utmost caution. Suddenly they were surprised and alarmed by a vivid blaze of light bursting through the trees on the left.

"Some building must be on fire!" exclaimed Viviana.

"It is Ordsall Hall—it is your father's residence," cried Humphrey Chetham.

"It is the work of that accursed pursuivant, I will be sworn," said Guy Fawkes.

"If it be so, may Heaven's fire consume him!" rejoined Oldcorne.

"Alas, alas!" cried Viviana, bursting into tears, "I thought myself equal to every calamity; but this new stroke of fate is more than I can bear."

As she spoke, the conflagration evidently increased. The sky was illumined by the red reflection of the flames; and as the party hurried forward to a rising ground, whence a better view could be obtained of the spectacle, they saw the dark walls of the ancient mansion apparently wrapped in the devouring element.

"Let us hasten thither," cried Viviana, distractedly.

"I and Guy Fawkes will fly there," replied the young merchant, "and render all the assistance in our power. But, first, let me convey you to the cave."

More dead than alive, Viviana suffered herself to be borne in that direction. Making his way over every impediment, Chetham soon reached the excavation; and depositing his lovely burden upon the stone couch, and leaving her in charge of the priest, he hurried with Guy Fawkes towards the hall.

On arriving at the termination of the avenue, they found, to their great relief, that it was not the main structure, but an outbuilding which was in flames, and from its situation the young merchant conceived it to be the stables. As soon as they made this discovery, they slackened their pace, being apprehensive, from the shouts and other sounds that reached them, that some hostile party might be among the assemblage. Crossing the drawbridge—which was fortunately lowered—they were about to shape their course towards the stables, which lay at the further side of the hall, when they perceived the old steward, *Heydocks, standing at the doorway and wringing his hands in distraction.* Humphrey Chetham immediately called to him.

"*I should know that voice!*" cried the old man, stepping forward.

"Ah! Mr. Chetham, is it you? You are arrived at a sad time, sir—a sad time—to see the old house, where I have dwelt, man and boy, sixty years and more, in flames. But one calamity has trodden upon the heels of another. Ever since Sir William departed for Holywell nothing has gone right—nothing whatever. First the house was searched by the pursuivant and his gang; then my young mistress disappeared; then it was rifled by these plunderers; and now, to crown all, it is on fire, and will speedily be burnt to the ground."

"Say not so," replied the young merchant. "The flames have not yet reached the hall; and if exertion is used, they may be extinguished without further mischief."

"Let those who have kindled them extinguish them," replied Heydocke, sullenly. "I will not raise hand more."

"Who are the incendiaries?" demanded Fawkes.

"The pursuivant and his myrmidons," replied Heydocke. "They came here to-night; and after ransacking the house under pretence of procuring further evidence against my master, and carrying off everything valuable they could collect—plate, jewels, ornaments, money, and even wearing apparel—they ended by locking up all the servants—except myself, who managed to elude their vigilance—in the cellar, and setting fire to the stables."

"Wretches!" exclaimed Humphrey Chetham.

"Wretches indeed!" repeated the steward. "But this is not all the villany they contemplate. I had concealed myself in the storeroom under a heap of lumber, and in searching for me they chanced upon a barrel of gunpowder——"

"Well!" interrupted Guy Fawkes.

"Well, sir," pursued Heydocke, "I heard the pursuivant remark to one of his comrades, 'This is a lucky discovery. If we can't find the steward, we'll blow him and the old house to the devil.' Just then some one came to tell him I was hidden in the stables, and the whole troop adjourned thither. But being balked of their prey, I suppose they wreaked their vengeance in the way you perceive."

"No doubt," rejoined Humphrey Chetham. "But they shall bitterly rue it. I will myself represent the affair to the commissioners."

"It will be useless," groaned Heydocke. "There is no law to protect the property of a Catholic."

"Where is the barrel of gunpowder?" asked Guy Fawkes, as if struck by a sudden idea.

"The villains took it with them when they quitted the storeroom," replied the steward; "I suppose they have got it in the yard."

"They have lighted a fire which shall be quenched with their blood," rejoined Fawkes, fiercely. "Follow me. I may need you both."

So saying, he darted off, and turning the corner, came in front of the blazing pile. Occupying one side of a large quadrangular court, the stables were wholly disconnected with the hall; and though the fire burnt furiously, yet, as the wind carried the flames and sparks in a contrary direction, it was possible the latter building might escape if due precaution were taken. So far, however, from this being the case, it seemed the *object of the bystanders to assist the progress of the conflagration*. Several horses, saddled and bridled, had been removed from the stable, and placed within an open cowhouse. To these Guy

Fawkes called Chetham's attention, and desired him and the old steward to secure some of them. Hastily giving directions to Heydocke, the young merchant obeyed,—sprang on the back of the nearest courser, and, seizing the bridles of two others, rode off with them. His example was followed by Heydocke, and one steed only was left. Such was the confusion and clamour prevailing around, that the whole proceeding passed unnoticed.

Guy Fawkes, meanwhile, ensconcing himself behind the court-gate, looked about for the barrel of gunpowder. For some time he could discover no trace of it. At length, beneath a shed, not far from him, he perceived a soldier seated upon a small cask, which he had no doubt was the object he was in search of. So intent was the man upon the spectacle before him, that he was wholly unaware of the approach of an enemy; and creeping noiselessly up to him, Guy Fawkes felled him to the ground with a blow from the heavy butt-end of his petronel. The action was not perceived by the others; and carrying the cask out of the yard, Fawkes burst in the lid, and ascertained that the contents were what they had been represented. He then glanced around, to see how he could best execute his purpose.

On the top of the wall adjoining the stables he beheld the pursuivant, with three or four soldiers, giving directions and issuing orders. Another and lower wall, forming the opposite side of the quadrangle, and built on the edge of the moat, approached the scene of the fire; and on this Guy Fawkes, with the barrel of gunpowder on his shoulder, mounted. Concealing himself behind a tree which overshadowed it, he watched a favourable moment for his enterprise.

He had not to wait long. Prompted by some undefinable feeling, which caused him to rush upon his destruction, the pursuivant ventured upon the roof of the stables, and was followed by his companions. No sooner did this occur, than Guy Fawkes dashed forward, and hurled the barrel with all his force into the midst of the flames, throwing himself at the same moment into the moat. The explosion was instantaneous and tremendous—so loud as to be audible even under the water. Its effects were terrible. The bodies of the pursuivant and his companions were blown into the air, and carried to the further side of the moat. Of those standing before the building several were destroyed, and all more or less injured. The walls were thrown down by the concussion, and the roof and its fiery fragments projected into the moat. An effectual stop was put to the conflagration; and when Guy Fawkes rose to the boiling and agitated surface of the water, the flames were entirely extinguished. Hearing groans on the opposite bank of the moat, he forced his way through the blazing beams which were hissing near him; and snatching up a still burning fragment, hastened in the direction of the sound. In the blackened and mutilated object that met his gaze, he recognised the pursuivant. The dying wretch also recognised him, and attempted to speak; but in vain—his tongue refused its office, and with a horrible attempt at articulation he expired.

Alarmed by the explosion, the domestics—who, it has already been mentioned, were confined in the cellar—were rendered so desperate by their fears, that they contrived to break out of their prison, and now hastened to the stables to ascertain the cause of the report. Leaving

them to assist the sufferers, whose dreadful groans awakened some feelings of compunction in his iron breast, Guy Fawkes caught the steed—which had broken its bridle and rushed off, and now stood shivering, shaking, and drenched in moisture near the drawbridge—and, mounting it, galloped towards the cave.

At its entrance, he was met by Humphrey Chetham and Oldcorne, who eagerly inquired what had happened.

Guy Fawkes briefly explained.

"It is the hand of Heaven manifested by your arm, my son," observed the priest. "Would that it had stricken the tyrant and apostate prince by whom our church is persecuted! But his turn will speedily arrive."

"Peace, father!" cried Guy Fawkes, sternly.

"I do not lament the fate of the pursuivant," observed Humphrey Chetham; "but this is a frightful waste of human life—and in such a cause!"

"It is the cause of Heaven, young sir," rejoined the priest, angrily.

"I do not think so," returned Chetham; "and, but for my devotion to Viviana, I would have no further share in it."

"You are at liberty to leave us, if you think proper," retorted the priest, coldly.

"Nay, say not so, father," interposed Viviana, who had been an unobserved listener to the foregoing discourse. "You owe your life—your liberty to Mr. Chetham."

"True, daughter," replied the priest. "I have been too hasty, and entreat his forgiveness."

"You have it, reverend sir," rejoined the young merchant. "And now, Master Heydocke," he added, turning to the steward, "you may return to the hall with safety. No one will molest you more, and your presence may be needed."

"But my young mistress——" said Heydocke.

"I am setting out for Holywell, to join my father," replied Viviana. "You will receive our instructions from that place."

"It is well," returned the old man, bowing respectfully. "Heaven shield us from further misfortune!"

Humphrey Chetham having assisted Viviana into the saddle, and the rest of the party having mounted, they took the road to Chester, while Heydocke returned to Ordsall Hall.

CHAPTER X.—THE PILGRIMAGE TO SAINT WINIFRED'S WELL.

EARLY on the following morning, the party, who had ridden hard, and had paused only for a short time at Knutsford to rest their steeds, approached the ancient and picturesque city of Chester. Skirting its high, and then partly fortified walls, above which appeared the massive tower of the venerable cathedral, they passed through the east gate; and proceeding along the street deriving its name from that entrance, were about to halt before the door of a large hostel, called the Saint Werburgh, when, to their great surprise, they perceived Catesby riding towards them.

"I thought I could not be mistaken," cried the latter, as he drew near and saluted Viviana. "I was about to set out for Manchester

with a despatch to you from your father, Miss Radcliffe, when this most unexpected and fortunate encounter spares me the journey. But may I ask why I see you here, and thus attended?" he added, glancing uneasily at Humphrey Chetham.

A few words from Father Oldcorne explained all. Catesby affected to bend his brow, and appear concerned at the relation. But he could scarcely repress his satisfaction.

"Sir William Radcliffe *must* join us now," he whispered to the priest.

"He must—he *shall*," replied Oldcorne, in the same tone.

"Your father wishes you to join him at Holt, Miss Radcliffe," remarked Catesby, turning to her, "whence the pilgrimage starts to-morrow for Saint Winifred's Well. There are already nearly thirty devout persons assembled. Among them are Sir Everard and Lady Digby, the Lady Anne Vaux and her sister Mrs. Brooksby; Mr. Ambrose Rookwood and his wife; the two Winters, Tresham, Wright, Fathers Garnet and Fisher, and many others, in all probability unknown to you. The procession started ten days ago from Gothurst, in Buckinghamshire, Sir Everard Digby's residence, and proceeded thence by slow stages to Norbrook and Haddington, at each of which houses a halt was made. Yesterday it reached Holt, and starts, as I have just told you, to-morrow for Holywell. If so disposed, you will be able to attend it."

"I will gladly do so," replied Viviana. "And since I find it is not necessary to hurry forward, I will rest myself for a short time here."

So saying, she dismounted, and the whole party entered the hostel. Viviana withdrew to seek a short repose, and glance over her father's letter, while Catesby, Guy Fawkes, and Oldcorne, were engaged in deep consultation. Humphrey Chetham, perceiving that his attendance was no further required, and that he was an object of suspicion and dislike to Catesby,—for whom he also entertained a similar aversion,—prepared to return. And when Viviana made her appearance, he advanced to bid her farewell.

"I can be of no further service to you, Viviana," he said, in a mournful tone; "and as my presence might be as unwelcome to your father, as it seems to be to others of your friends, I will now take my leave."

"Farewell, Mr. Chetham," she replied. "I will not attempt to oppose your departure; for, much as I grieve to lose you—and that I do so these tears will testify,—I feel that it is for the best. I owe you much—more, far more than I can ever repay. It would be unworthy in me, and unfair to you, to say that I do not, and shall not ever, feel the deepest interest in you; that, next to my father, there is no one whom I regard—nay, whom I love so much."

"Love, Viviana!" echoed the young merchant, trembling.

"Love, Mr. Chetham," she continued, turning very pale, "since you *compel* me to repeat the word. I avow it boldly,—because"—and *her voice faltered*,—"I would not have you suppose me ungrateful, *and because I never can be yours.*"

"*I will not attempt to dissuade you from the fatal determination I have formed of burying your charms in a cloister,*" rejoined

Humphrey Chetham. "But, oh! if you *do* love me, why condemn yourself—why condemn me to hopeless misery?"

"I will tell you why," replied Viviana. "Because you are not of my faith: and because I never will wed a heretic."

"I am answered," replied the young merchant, sadly.

"Mr. Chetham," interposed Oldcorne, who had approached them unperceived, "it is in your power to change Viviana's determination by being reconciled to the Church of Rome."

"Then it will remain unaltered," replied Chetham, firmly.

"And if Mr. Chetham would consent to this proposal, I would not," said Viviana. "Farewell," she added, extending her hand to him, which he pressed to his lips. "Do not let us prolong an interview so painful to us both. The best wish I can desire for you is, that we may never meet again."

Without another word, and without hazarding a look at the object of his affections, Chetham rushed out of the room, and mounting his horse, rode off in the direction of Manchester.

"Daughter," observed Oldcorne, as soon as he was gone, "I cannot too highly approve of your conduct, or too warmly applaud the mastery you display over your feelings. But——" And he hesitated.

"But what, father?" cried Viviana eagerly. "Do you think I have done wrong in dismissing him?"

"By no means, dear daughter," replied the priest. "You have acted most discreetly. But you will forgive me if I urge you—nay, implore you not to take the veil, but rather to bestow your hand upon some Catholic gentleman——"

"Such as Mr. Catesby," interrupted Viviana, glancing in the direction of the individual she mentioned, who was watching them narrowly from the further end of the room.

"Ay, Mr. Catesby," repeated Oldcorne, affecting not to notice the scornful emphasis laid on the name; "none more fitting could be found—none more worthy of you. Our church has not a more zealous servant and upholder than he; and he will be at once a father and a husband to you. Such a union would be highly profitable to our religion. And, though it is well for those whose hearts are burdened with affliction, and who are unable to render any active service to their faith, to retire from the world, it behoves every sister of the Romish Church to support it at a juncture like the present, by any sacrifice of personal feeling."

"Urge me no more, father," replied Viviana, firmly. "I will make every sacrifice for my religion consistent with principle and feeling. But I will not make this. Neither am I required to make it. And I beg you will entreat Mr. Catesby to desist from further importunity."

Oldcorne bowed and retired. Nor was another syllable exchanged between them prior to their departure.

Crossing the old bridge over the Dee, then defended at each extremity by a gate and tower, the party took the road to Holt, where they arrived in about an hour. The recent conversation had thrown a restraint over them, which was not removed during the journey. Half-taciturn, as has already been remarked, Guy Fawkes seemed gloomier and more thoughtful than ever; and though he rode by the side of Viviana, he did not volunteer a remark, and scarcely app

conscious of her presence. Catesby and Oldcorne kept aloof, and it was not until they came in sight of the little town which formed their destination, that the former galloped forward, and striking into the path on the right, begged Viviana to follow him. A turn in the road shortly afterwards showed them a large mansion screened by a grove of beech-trees.

"That is the house to which we are going," observed Catesby.

And as he spoke, they approached a lodge, the gates of which being opened by an attendant, admitted them to the avenue.

Viviana's heart throbbed with delight at the anticipated meeting with her father; but she could not repress a feeling of anxiety at the distressing intelligence she had to impart to him. As she drew near the house she perceived him walking beneath the shade of the trees with two other persons; and quickening her pace, sprang from her steed, and almost before he was aware of it was in his arms.

"Why do I see you here so unexpectedly, my dear child?" cried Sir William Radcliffe, as soon as he had recovered from the surprise which her sudden appearance occasioned him. "Mr. Catesby only left this morning, charged with a letter entreating you to set out without delay—and now I behold you! What has happened?"

Viviana then recounted the circumstances of the last few days.

"It is as I feared," replied Sir William, in a desponding tone. "Our oppressors will never cease till they have driven us to desperation!"

"They will not!" rejoined a voice behind him. "Well may we exclaim with the prophet—'How long, O Lord, shall I cry, and thou wilt not hear? Shall I cry out to thee, suffering violence, and thou wilt not save? Why hast thou showed me iniquity and grievance, to see rapine and injustice before me? Why lookest thou upon them that do unjust things, and holdest thy peace when the wicked devoureth the man that is more just than himself?'"

Looking in the direction of the speaker, Viviana beheld a man in a priestly garb, whose countenance struck her forcibly. He was rather under the middle height, of a slight, spare figure, and in age might be about fifty. His features, which in youth must have been pleasing, if not handsome, and which were still regular, were pale and emaciated; but his eye was dark and of unusual brilliancy. A single glance at this person satisfied her it was Father Garnet, the provincial of the English Jesuits; nor was she mistaken in the supposition.

Of this remarkable person, so intimately connected with the main events of the history about to be related, it may be proper to offer some preliminary account. Born at Nottingham in 1554, in the reign of Queen Mary, and of obscure parentage, Henry Garnet was originally destined to the Protestant Church, and educated, with a view to taking orders, at Winchester school, whence it was intended he should be removed in due course to Oxford. But the design was never carried into effect. Influenced by motives, into which it is now scarcely worth while to inquire, and which have been contested by writers on both sides of the question, Garnet proceeded from Winchester to London, where he engaged himself as corrector of the press to a printer of law books, named *Tottel*; and in this capacity became acquainted with Sir *Edward Coke* and *Chief Justice Popham*, one of whom was afterwards to be the leading counsel against him, and the other his judge. After

continuing in this employment for two years, during which he had meditated a change in his religion, he went abroad; and travelling first to Madrid and then to Rome, saw enough of the Catholic priesthood to confirm his resolution, and in 1575 he assumed the habit of a Jesuit. Pursuing his studies with the utmost zeal and ardour at the Jesuits' College, under the celebrated Bellarmine, and the no less celebrated Clavius, he made such progress, that, upon the indisposition of the latter, he was able to fill the mathematical chair. Nor was he less skilled in philosophy, metaphysics, and divinity; and his knowledge of Hebrew was so profound, that he taught it publicly in the Roman schools.

To an enthusiastic zeal in the cause of the religion he had espoused, Garnet added great powers of persuasion and eloquence—a combination of qualities well fitting him for the office of a missionary priest; and undismayed by the dangers he would have to encounter, and eager to propagate his doctrines, he solicited to be sent on this errand to his own country. At the instance of Father Persons, he received an appointment to the mission in 1586, and secretly landed in England in the same year. Braving every danger, and shrinking from no labour, he sought on all hands to make proselytes to the ancient faith, and to sustain the wavering courage of its professors. Two years afterwards, on the imprisonment of the Superior of the Jesuits, being raised to that important post, he was enabled to extend his sphere of action; and redoubling his exertions in consequence, he so well discharged his duties, that it was mainly owing to him that the Catholic party was kept together during the fierce persecutions of the latter end of Elizabeth's reign.

Compelled to personate various characters, as he travelled from place to place, Garnet had acquired a remarkable facility for disguise; and such was his address and courage, that he not unfrequently imposed upon the very officers sent in pursuit of him. Up to the period of Elizabeth's demise, he had escaped arrest; and, though involved in the treasonable intrigue with the King of Spain, and other conspiracies, he procured a general pardon under the great seal. His office and profession naturally brought him into contact with the chief Catholic families throughout the kingdom; and he maintained an active correspondence with many of them, by means of his various agents and emissaries. The great object of his life being the restoration of the fallen religion, to accomplish this, as he conceived, great and desirable end, he was prepared to adopt any means, however violent and obnoxious. When, under the seal of confession, Catesby revealed to him his dark designs, so far from discouraging him, all Garnet counselled was caution. Having tested the disposition of the wealthier Romanists to rise against their oppressors, and finding a general insurrection, as has before been stated, impracticable, he gave every encouragement and assistance to the conspiracy forming among the more desperate and discontented of the party. At his instigation, the present pilgrimage to St. Winifred's Well was undertaken, in the hope that, when so large a body of the Catholics were collected together, some additional aid to the project might be obtained.

One of the most mysterious and inexplicable portions of Garnet's history is that relating to Anne Vaux. This lady, the daughter of

Lord Vaux of Harrowden, a rigid Catholic nobleman, and one of Garnet's earliest patrons and friends, on the death of her father, in 1595, attached herself to his fortunes—accompanied him in all his missions—shared all his privations and dangers—and, regardless of calumny or reproach, devoted herself entirely to his service. What is not less singular, her sister, who had married a Catholic gentleman named Brooksby, became his equally zealous attendant. Their enthusiasm produced a similar effect on Mr. Brooksby; and wherever Garnet went, all three accompanied him.

By his side, on the present occasion, stood Sir Everard Digby. Accounted one of the handsomest, most accomplished, and best-informed men of his time, Sir Everard, at the period of this history only twenty-four years of age, had married, when scarcely sixteen, Maria, heiress of the ancient and honourable family of Mulshoe, with whom he obtained a large fortune, and the magnificent estate of Gothurst or Gaythurst, in Buckinghamshire. Knighted by James the First at Belvoir Castle, on his way from Scotland to London, Digby, who had once formed one of the most brilliant ornaments of the court, had of late in a great degree retired from it. "Notwithstanding," writes Father Greenway, "that he had dwelt much in the queen's court, and was in the way of obtaining honours and distinction by his graceful manners and rare parts, he chose rather to bear the cross with the persecuted Catholics, *et vivere abjectus in domo Domini*, than to sail through the pleasures of a palace and the prosperities of the world, to the shipwreck of his conscience and the destruction of his soul." Having only when he completed his minority professed the Catholic religion, he became deeply concerned at its fallen state, and his whole thoughts were bent upon its restoration. This change in feeling was occasioned chiefly, if not altogether, by Garnet, by whom his conversion had been accomplished.

Sir Everard Digby was richly attired in a black velvet doublet with sleeves slashed with white satin, and wore a short mantle of the same material, similarly lined. He had the enormous trunk hose heretofore mentioned as the distinguishing peculiarity of the costume of the period, and wore black velvet shoes, ornamented with white roses. An ample ruff encircled his throat. His hat was steeple-crowned, and somewhat broader in the leaf than was ordinarily worn, and shaded with a plume of black feathers. His hair was raven-black, and he wore a pointed beard and moustaches. His figure was tall and stately, and his features grave and finely formed.

By this time the group had been joined by the others, and a friendly greeting took place. Guy Fawkes was presented by Catesby to Sir William Radcliffe and Sir Everard Digby. To Garnet he required no introduction, and Father Oldcorne was known to all. After a little further conversation, the party adjourned to the house which belonged to a Welsh Catholic gentleman named Griffiths, who, though absent at the time, had surrendered it to the use of Sir Everard Digby and his friends.

On their entrance, Viviana was introduced by her father to Lady Digby, who presided as hostess, and welcomed her with great cordiality. Viviana was then conducted to her own room, where she was speedily joined by Sir William, and they remained closeted together

till summoned to the principal meal of the day. At the table, which was most hospitably served, Viviana found, in addition to her former companions, a large assemblage, to most of whom she was a stranger, consisting of Anne Vaux, Mr. Brooksby and his wife, Ambrose Rookwood, the brothers Winter, the two Wrights, Francis Tresham,—persons of whom it will be necessary to make particular mention hereafter,—and several others, in all amounting to thirty.

The meal over, the company dispersed, and Viviana and her father, passing through an open window, wandered forth upon a beautiful and spreading lawn, and thence under the shade of the beech-trees. They had not been long here, anxiously conferring on recent events, when they perceived Garnet and Catesby approaching.

"Father, dear father!" cried Viviana, hastily, "I was about to warn you; but I have not time to do so now. A dark and dangerous plot is in agitation to restore our religion. Mr. Catesby is anxious to league you with it. Do not—do not yield to his solicitations!"

"Fear nothing on that score, Viviana," replied Sir William; "I have already perplexities enow, without adding to them."

"I will leave you, then," she replied. And, as soon as the others came up, she made an excuse for withdrawing, and returned to the house. The window of her chamber commanded the avenue, and she watched the group from it. They remained for a long time pacing up and down, in earnest conversation. By-and-by, they were joined by Oldcorne and Fawkes. Then came a third party, consisting of the Winters and Wrights; and, lastly, Sir Everard Digby and Tresham swelled the list.

The assemblage was then harangued by Catesby, and the most profound attention was paid to his address. Viviana kept her eye fixed upon her father's countenance, and from its changing expression inferred the effect produced upon him. At the conclusion of the speech, the assemblage separated in little groups; and she perceived with great uneasiness, that Father Garnet passed his arm through that of her father, and led him away. Some time elapsed, and neither of them reappeared.

"My warning was in vain; he has joined them!" she exclaimed.

"No, Viviana!" cried her father's voice behind her. "I have not joined them. Nor shall I do so."

"Heaven be praised!" she exclaimed, flinging her arms around his neck.

Neither of them was aware that they were overheard by Garnet, who had noiselessly followed Sir William into the room, and muttered to himself—"For all this, he shall join the plot, and she shall wed Catesby."

Coughing slightly, to announce his presence, and apologising to Viviana for the intrusion, he told her he came to confess her previously to the celebration of mass, which would take place that evening, in a small chapel in the house. Wholly obedient to the command of her spiritual advisers, Viviana instantly signified her assent; and her father having withdrawn, she laid open the inmost secrets of her heart to the Jesuit. *Severely reprobating her love for a heretic, before he would give her absolution, Garnet enjoined her, as a penance, to walk barefoot to the Holy Well on the morrow, and to make a costly offering*

the shrine of the saint. Compliance being promised to his injunctions, he pronounced the absolution and departed.

Soon after this, mass was celebrated by Garnet, and the sacrament administered to the assemblage.

An hour before daybreak, the party again assembled in the chapel, where matins were performed; after which, the female devotees, who were clothed in snow-white woollen robes with white sleeves and hoods, and having large black crosses woven in front, retired for a short time, and re-appeared with their feet bared and hair unbound. Each had a large rosary attached to the cord that bound her waist.

Catesby thought Viviana had never appeared so lovely as in this garb; and as he gazed at her white and delicately formed feet, her small rounded ankles, her dark and abundant tresses falling in showers almost to the ground, he became more deeply enamoured than ever. His passionate gaze was, however, unnoticed, as the object of it kept her eyes steadily fixed on the ground. Lady Digby, who was a most beautiful woman, scarcely appeared to less advantage; and, as she walked side by side with Viviana in the procession, the pair attracted universal admiration from all who beheld them.

Everything being at last in readiness, and the order of march fully arranged, two youthful choristers in surplices, chanting a hymn to Saint Winifred, set forth. They were followed by two men bearing silken banners, on one of which was displayed the martyrdom of the saint whose shrine they were about to visit, and on the other a lamb carrying a cross; next came Fathers Oldcorne and Fisher, each sustaining a large silver crucifix; next, Garnet alone, in the full habit of his order; next, the females, in the attire before described, and walking two and two; next, Sir Everard Digby and Sir William Radcliffe; and lastly, the rest of the pilgrims, to the number of fourteen. These were all on foot. But at the distance of fifty paces behind them rode Guy Fawkes and Catesby, at the head of twenty well-armed and well-mounted attendants, intended to serve as a guard in case of need.

In such order, this singular procession moved forward at a slow pace, taking its course along a secluded road leading to the ridge of hills extending from the neighbourhood of Wrexham to Mold, and thence, in an almost unbroken chain, to Holywell.

Along these heights, whence magnificent views were obtained of the broad estuary of the Dee and the more distant ocean, the train proceeded without interruption; and though the road selected was one seldom traversed, and through a country thinly peopled, still, the rumour of the pilgrimage having gone abroad, hundreds were stationed at different points to behold it. Some expressions of disapprobation were occasionally manifested by the spectators; but the presence of the large armed force effectually prevented interference.

Whenever such a course could be pursued, the procession took its way over the sward. Still the sufferings of the females were severe in the extreme; and before Viviana had proceeded a mile, her white, tender feet were cut and bruised by the sharp flints over which she walked; every step she took leaving a bloody print behind it. Lady Digby was in little better condition. But such was the zeal by which they, in common with all the other devotees, were animated, that not a single murmur escaped them.

Proceeding in this way, they reached at mid-day a small stone chapel on the summit of the hill overlooking Plas-Newydd, where they halted; and devotions being performed, the females bathed their lacerated limbs in a neighbouring brook, after which they were rubbed with a cooling and odorous ointment. Thus refreshed, they again set forward, and halting a second time at Plas-Isaf, where similar religious ceremonies were observed, they rested for the day at a lodging prepared for their reception in the vicinity of Mold.

The night being passed in prayer, early in the morning they commenced their march in the same order as before. When Viviana first set her foot to the ground, she felt as if treading on hot iron, and the pain she endured was so excruciating that she could not repress a cry.

"Heed not your sufferings, dear daughter," observed Garnet, compassionately. "The waters of the holy fountain will heal the wounds both of soul and body."

Overcoming her agony by a powerful effort, she contrived to limp forward; and the whole party was soon afterwards in motion. Halting for two hours at Pentre-Terfyn, and again at Skeviog, the train, towards evening, reached the summit of the hill overlooking Holywell, at the foot of which could be seen the ruins of Basingwerk Abbey, and the roof of the ancient chapel erected over the sacred spring. At this sight, those who were foremost in the procession fell on their knees; and the horsemen, dismounting, imitated their example. An earnest supplication to Saint Winifred was then poured forth by Father Garnet, in which all the others joined, and a hymn in her honour chanted by the choristers.

Their devotions ended, the whole train arose, and walked slowly down the steep descent. As they entered the little town, which owes its name and celebrity to the miraculous spring rising within it, they were met by a large concourse of people, who had flocked from Flint and the other neighbouring places to witness the ceremonial. Most of the inhabitants of Holywell, holding their saintly patroness in the deepest veneration, viewed this pilgrimage to her shrine as a proper tribute of respect; while those of the opposite faith were greatly impressed by it. As the procession advanced, the crowd divided into two lines to allow it passage; and many fell on their knees imploring a blessing from Garnet, which he in no instance refused. When within a hundred yards of the sacred well, they were met by a priest, followed by another small train of pilgrims. A Latin oration having been pronounced by this priest, and replied to in the same language by Garnet, the train was once more put in motion, and presently reached the ancient fabric built over the sacred fountain.

The legend of Saint Winifred is so well known, that it is scarcely necessary to repeat it here. For the benefit of the uninformed, however, it may be stated that she flourished about the middle of the seventh century, and was the daughter of Theweth, one of the chief lords of Wales. Devoutly educated by a monk named Beuno, who afterwards received canonization, she took the veil, and retired to a small monastery (the ruins of which still exist), built by her father near the scene of her subsequent martyrdom. Persecuted by the addresses of Caradoc, son of Alan, Prince of Wales, she fled from him to avoid his violence. He followed, and, inflamed by fury at her re-

sistance, struck off her head. For this atrocity, the earth instantly opened and swallowed him alive; while from the spot where the head had fallen gushed forth a fountain of unequalled force and purity. The bottom of this miraculous well is strewn with pebbles streaked with red veins, in memory of the virgin saint from whose blood it sprang. On its margin grows an odorous moss, while its gelid and translucent waters are esteemed a remedy for most disorders. Winifred's career did not terminate with her decapitation. Resuscitated by the prayers of Saint Beuno, she lived many years a life of the utmost sanctity, bearing, as a mark of the miracle performed in her behalf, a narrow crimson circle round her throat.

Passing the chapel adjoining the well, built in the reign of Henry the Seventh by his mother, the pious Countess of Richmond, the pilgrims came to the swift clear stream rushing from the well. Instead of ascending the steps leading to the edifice built over the spring, they plunged into the stream, and, crossing it, entered the structure by a doorway on the further side. Erected by the Countess of Richmond at the same period as the chapel, this structure, quadrangular in form, and of great beauty, consists of light clustered pillars and mouldings, supporting the most gorgeous tracery and groining; the whole being ornamented with sculptured bosses, pendent capitals, fretwork, niches, and tabernacles. In the midst is a large stone basin, to receive the water of the fountain; around which the procession now grouped, and, as soon as all were assembled, at the command of Father Garnet they fell on their knees.

It was a solemn and striking sight to see this large group prostrated around the beautiful fountain, and covered by the ancient structure—a touching thing to hear the voice of prayer mingling with the sound of rushing water. After this, they all arose. A hymn was then chanted, and votive offerings made at the shrine of the saint. The male portion of the assemblage then followed Garnet to the chapel, where further religious rights were performed; while the female devotees, remaining near the fountain, resigned themselves to the care of several attendants of their own sex, who, having bathed their feet in the water, applied some of the fragrant moss above described to the wounds; and such was the faith of the patients, or the virtue of the application, that in a short time they all felt perfectly restored, and able to join their companions in the chapel. In this way the evening was spent; and it was not until late that they finished their devotions, and departed to the lodgings provided for them in the town.

Impressed with a strange superstitious feeling, which he would scarcely acknowledge to himself, Guy Fawkes determined to pass the night near the well. Accordingly, without communicating his intention to his companions, he threw a small knapsack over his shoulder, containing a change of linen and a few articles of attire, and proceeded thither.

It was a brilliant moonlight night; and as the radiance, streaming through the thin-clustered columns of the structure, lighted up its *airy architecture*, and fell upon the clear cold waves of the fountain, *revealing the blood-streaked pebbles beneath*, the effect was so *inexpressibly beautiful*, that, charmed by the sight, Guy Fawkes remained *for some time standing near the edge of the basin*, as if fascinated by

the marvellous spring that boiled up and sparkled at his feet. Resolved to try the efficacy of the bath, he threw off his clothes and plunged into the well. The water was cold as ice; but on emerging from it he felt wonderfully refreshed. Having dressed himself, he wrapped his cloak around him, and throwing himself on the stone floor, placed the knapsack under his head, and grasping a petronel in his right hand, to be ready in case of a surprise, disposed himself to slumber.

Accustomed to a soldier's couch, he soon fell asleep. He had not long closed his eyes when he dreamed that from out the well a female figure, slight and unsubstantial as the element from which she sprang, arose. She was robed in what resembled a nun's garb, but so thin and vapoury that the very moonlight shone through it. From the garments of the figure, as well as from the crimson circle round her throat, he knew that it must be the patroness of the place, the sainted Winifred, that he beheld. He felt no terror, but the deepest awe. The arm of the figure was raised,—her benignant regards fixed upon him,—and, as soon as she gained the level of the basin, she glided towards him.

CHAPTER XI.—THE VISION.

BEFORE daybreak on the following morning, Garnet, who had been engaged in earnest conference with Catesby during the whole of the night, repaired to the sacred spring for the purpose of bathing within it, and performing his solitary devotions at the shrine of the saint. On ascending the steps of the structure, he perceived Guy Fawkes kneeling beside the fountain, apparently occupied in prayer. Unwilling to disturb him, he paused. Finding, however, after the lapse of a few minutes, that he did not move, he advanced towards him, and was about to lay his hand upon his shoulder, when he was arrested by the very extraordinary expression of his countenance. His lips were partly open, but perfectly motionless, and his eyes, almost starting from their sockets, were fixed upon the boiling waters of the spring. His hands were clasped, and his look altogether was that of one whose faculties were numbed by awe or terror.

Aware of the fanatical and enthusiastic character of Fawkes, Garnet had little doubt that, by keeping long vigil at the fountain, he had worked himself into such a state of over-excitement as to imagine he beheld some preternatural appearance; and it was with some curiosity that he awaited the result. Glancing in the same direction, his eye rested upon the bottom of the well, but he could discern nothing except the glittering and blood-streaked pebbles, and the reflection of the early sunbeams that quivered on its steaming surface. At length, a convulsion passed over the frame of the kneeler, and heaving a deep sigh he arose. Turning to quit the spring, he confronted Garnet, and demanded, in a low voice,

"Have you likewise seen the vision, father?"

Garnet made no reply, but regarded him steadfastly.

"Has the blessed Winifred appeared to you, I say?" continued Fawkes.

"No," answered Garnet; "I am but just come hither. It is for you, my son—the favoured of Heaven—for whom such glorious visions

are reserved. I have seen nothing. How did the saint manifest herself to you?"

"In her earthly form," replied Fawkes; "or rather, I should say, in the semblance of the form she bore on earth. Listen to me, father. I came hither last night to make my couch beside the fountain. After plunging into it, I felt marvellously refreshed, and disposed myself to rest on that stone. Scarcely had my eyes closed when the saintly virgin appeared to me. Oh! father, it was a vision of seraphic beauty, such as the eye of man hath seldom seen!"

"And such only as it is permitted the elect of Heaven to see," observed Garnet.

"Alas! father," rejoined Guy Fawkes, "I can lay little claim to be called one of the elect. Nay, I begin to fear that I have incurred the displeasure of Heaven."

"Think not so, my son," replied Garnet, uneasily. "Relate your vision, and I will interpret it to you."

"Thus, then, it was, father," returned Fawkes. "The saint arose from out the well, and, gliding towards me, laid her finger upon my brow. My eyes opened, but I was as one oppressed with a nightmare, unable to move. I then thought I heard my name pronounced by a voice so wondrously sweet that my senses were quite ravished. Fain would I have prostrated myself, but my limbs refused their office. Neither could I speak, for my tongue was also enchained."

"Proceed, my son," observed Garnet; "I am curious to know what ensued."

"Father," replied Guy Fawkes, "if the form I beheld was that of Saint Winifred—and that it was so, I cannot doubt—the enterprise on which we are engaged will fail. It is *not* approved by Heaven. The vision warned me to desist."

"You cannot desist, my son," rejoined Garnet, sternly. "Your oath binds you to the project."

"True," replied Fawkes; "and I have no thought of abandoning it; but I am well assured it will not be successful."

"Your thinking so, my son, will be the most certain means of realising your apprehensions," replied Garnet, gravely. "But let me hear the exact words of the spirit. You may have misunderstood them."

"I cannot repeat them precisely, father," replied Fawkes; "but I could not misapprehend their import, which was the deepest commiseration for our forlorn and fallen church, but a positive interdiction against any attempt to restore it by bloodshed. 'Suffer on,' said the spirit; 'bear the yoke patiently, and in due season God will avenge your wrongs and free you from oppression. You are thus afflicted that your faith may be purified. But if you resort to violence, you will breed confusion, and injure, not serve, the holy cause on which you are embarked.' Such, father, was the language of the saint. It was uttered in a tone so tender and sympathising, that every word found an echo in my heart, and I repented having pledged myself to the undertaking. But when I tell you that she added that all concerned in *the conspiracy should perish*, perhaps you yourself may be deterred from proceeding further."

"Never!" returned Garnet. "Nor will I suffer any one engaged in

it to retreat. What matter if a few perish, if the many survive? Our blood will not be shed in vain, if the true religion of God is restored. Nay, as strongly as the blessed Winifred herself resisted the impious ravisher, Caradoc, will I resist all inducements to turn aside from my purpose. It may be that the enterprise will fail. It may be that we shall perish. But if we die thus, we shall die as martyrs, and our deaths will be highly profitable to the Catholic religion."

"I doubt it," observed Fawkes.

"My son," said Garnet, solemnly, "I have ever looked upon you as one destined to be the chief agent in the great work of redemption. I have thought that, like Judith, you were chosen to destroy the Holofernes who oppresses us. Having noted in you a religious fervour, and resolution admirably fitting you for the task, I thought, and still think, you expressly chosen by Heaven for it. But, if you have any misgiving, I beseech you to withdraw from it. I will absolve you from your oath; and, enjoining you only to strictest secrecy, will pray you to depart at once, lest your irresolution should be communicated to the others."

"Fear nothing from me, father," rejoined Fawkes. "I have no irresolution, nor shall any engaged by us be shaken by my apprehension. You have asked me what I saw and heard, and I have told you truly. But I will speak of it no more."

"It will be well to observe silence, my son," answered Garnet; "for though you, like myself, are unchanged, the effect of the vision on others might be injurious. But you have not yet brought your relation to an end. How did the figure disappear?"

"As it arose, father," replied Fawkes. "Uttering in a sweet but solemn voice, yet ringing in my ears, the words, 'Be warned!' it glided back to the fountain, whose waves, as it approached, grew still, and gradually melted from my view."

"But when I came hither, you appeared to be gazing at the spring," said Garnet. "What did you then behold?"

"My first impulse, on awaking about an hour ago," replied Fawkes, "was to prostrate myself before the fountain, and to entreat the intercession of the saint, who had thus marvellously revealed herself to me. As I prayed, methought its clear lucid waters became turbid, and turned to the colour of blood."

"It is a type of the blood of slaughtered brethren of our faith, which has been shed by our oppressors," rejoined Garnet.

"Rather of our own, which shall be poured forth in this cause," retorted Fawkes. "No matter; I am prepared to lose the last drop of mine."

"And I," said Garnet; "and I doubt not, like those holy men who have suffered for their faith, that we shall both win a crown of martyrdom."

"Amen!" exclaimed Fawkes. "And you think the sacrifice we are about to offer will prove acceptable to God?"

"I am convinced of it, my son," answered Garnet. "And I take the sainted virgin, from whose blood this marvellous spring was produced, to witness, that I devote myself unhesitatingly to the project, and that I firmly believe it will profit our church."

As he spoke, a singular circumstance occurred, which did not

to produce an impression on both parties—especially Guy Fawkes. A violent gust of wind, apparently suddenly aroused, whistled through the slender columns of the structure, and catching the surface of the water, dashed it in tiny waves against their feet.

"The saint is offended," observed Fawkes.

"It would almost seem so," replied Garnet, after a pause. "Let us proceed to the chapel, and pray at her shrine. We will confer on this matter hereafter. Meantime, swear to me that you will observe profound secrecy respecting this vision."

"I swear," replied Guy Fawkes.

At this moment another and more violent gust agitated the fountain.

"We will tarry here no longer," said Garnet. "I am not proof against these portents of ill."

So saying, he led the way to the chapel. Here they were presently joined by several of the female devotees, including Viviana, Anne Vaux, and Lady Digby. Matins were then said, after which various offerings were made at the shrine of the saint. Lady Digby presented a small tablet set in gold, representing on one side the martyrdom of Saint Winifred, and on the other the Salutation of our Lady. Anne Vaux gave a small enamelled cross of gold; Viviana a girdle of the same metal, with a pendant sustaining a small Saint John's head surrounded with pearls.

"Mine will be a poor soldier's offering," said Guy Fawkes, approaching the shrine, which was hung around with the crutches, staves, and bandages of those cured by the healing waters of the miraculous spring. "This small silver scallop-shell, given me by a pilgrim, who died in my arms near the chapel of Saint James of Compostella in Spain, is the sole valuable I possess."

"It will be as acceptable as a more costly gift, my son," replied Garnet, placing it on the shrine.

Of all the offerings then made, that silver scallop-shell is the only one preserved.

CHAPTER XII.—THE CONSPIRATORS.

ON Viviana's return from her devotions, she found her father in the greatest perturbation and alarm. The old steward, Heydocke, who had ridden express from Ordsall Hall, had just arrived, bringing word that the miserable fate of the pursuivant and his crew had aroused the whole country; that officers, attended by a strong force, and breathing vengeance, were in pursuit of Sir William Radcliffe and his daughter; that large sums were offered for the capture of Guy Fawkes and Father Oldcorne; that most of the servants were imprisoned; that he himself had escaped with great difficulty; and that to sum up this long catalogue of calamities, Master Humphrey Chetham was arrested and placed in the New Fleet. "In short, my dear young mistress," concluded the old man, "as I have just observed to Sir William, all is over with us, and nothing is left but the grave."

"What course have you resolved upon, dear father?" inquired Viviana, turning anxiously to Sir William.

"I shall surrender myself," he answered. "I am guilty of no crime, and can easily clear myself from all imputation."

"You are mistaken," she replied. "Do not hope for justice from those who know it not; but while the means of escape are allowed you, avail yourself of them."

"No, Viviana," replied Sir William Radcliffe, firmly; "my part is taken. I shall abide the arrival of the officers. For you, I shall entrust you to the care of Mr. Catesby."

"You cannot mean this, dear father?" she cried, with a look of distress; "and if you do, I will never consent to such an arrangement."

"Mr. Catesby is strongly attached to you, child," replied Sir William, "and will watch over your safety as carefully as I could do myself."

"He may be attached to me," rejoined Viviana, "though I doubt the disinterestedness of his love. But nothing can remove my repugnance to him. Forgive me, therefore, if, in this one instance, I decline to obey your commands. I dare not trust myself with Mr. Catesby."

"How am I to understand you?" inquired Sir William.

"Do not ask me to explain, dear father," she answered, "but believe I must have good reason for what I say. Since you are resolved upon surrendering yourself, I will go into captivity with you. The alternative is less dreadful than that you propose."

"You distract me, child," cried the knight, rising and pacing the chamber in great agitation. "I cannot bear the thought of your imprisonment. Yet, if I fly, I appear to confess myself guilty."

"If your worship will entrust Mistress Viviana with me," interposed the old steward, "I will convey her whithersoever you direct—I will watch over her day and night—and, if need be, die in her defence."

"Thou wert ever a faithful servant, good Heydocke," rejoined Sir William, extending his hand kindly to him, "and art as true in adversity as in prosperity."

"Shame to me if I were not," replied Heydocke, pressing the knight's fingers to his lips and bathing them in his tears. "Shame to me if I hesitated to lay down my life for a master to whom I owe so much!"

"If it is your pleasure, dear father," observed Viviana, "I will accompany Master Heydocke; but I would far rather be permitted to remain with you."

"It would avail nothing," replied Sir William; "we should be separated by the officers. Retire to your chamber, and prepare for instant departure; and in the mean while, I will consider what is best to be done."

"Your worship's decision must be speedy," observed Heydocke; "I had only a few hours' start of the officers. They will be here ere long."

"Take this purse," replied Sir William, "and hire three of the fleetest horses you can procure, and station yourself at the outskirts of the town, on the road to St. Asaph. You understand?"

"Perfectly," replied Heydocke. And he departed to execute his master's commands, while Viviana withdrew to her own chamber.

Left alone, the knight was perplexing himself as to where he should shape his course, when he was interrupted by the sudden entrance of Catesby and Garnet.

"We have just met your servant, Sir William," said the former, "and have learnt the alarming intelligence he has brought."

"What is your counsel in this emergency, father?" said Radcliffe, appealing to Garnet.

"Flight—instant flight, my son," was the answer.

"My counsel is resistance," said Catesby. "We are here assembled in large numbers, and are well armed. Let us await the arrival of the officers, and see whether they will venture to arrest you."

"They will arrest us all, if they have force sufficient to do so," replied Garnet; "and there are many reasons, as you well know, why it is desirable to avoid disturbance at present."

"True," replied Catesby. "What say you, then," he continued, addressing Radcliffe, "to our immediate return to Holt, where means may be found to screen you till this storm is blown over?"

Sir William having assented to the proposal, Catesby instantly departed to acquaint the others; and, as soon as preparations could be made, and horses procured, the whole party composing the pilgrimage quitted Holywell, and, ascending the hill at the back of the town, took the direction of Mold, where they arrived, having ridden at a swift pace, in about half an hour. From thence they proceeded, without accident or interruption, to the mansion they had recently occupied near Holt. On reaching it, all the domestics were armed, and certain of their number stationed at the different approaches to the house, to give the alarm in case of the enemy's appearance. But as nothing occurred during the night, the fears of Sir William and his friends began in some degree to subside.

About noon on the following day, as Guy Fawkes, who ever since the vision at Saint Winifred's Well had shunned all companionship, walked forth beneath the avenue alone, he heard a light step behind him, and turning, beheld Viviana. Gravely bowing, he was about to pursue his course, when quickening her pace, she was instantly by his side.

"I have a favour to solicit," she said.

"There is none I would refuse you," answered Fawkes, halting; "but, though I have the will, I may not have the power to grant your request."

"Hear me, then," she replied, hurriedly. "Of all my father's friends, of all who are here assembled, you are the only one I dare trust—the only one from whom I can hope for assistance."

"I am at once flattered and perplexed by your words," he rejoined; "nor can I guess whither they tend. But speak freely. If I cannot render you aid, I can at least give you counsel."

"I must premise, then," said Viviana, "that I am aware, from certain obscure hints let fall by Father Oldcorne, that you, Mr. Catesby, and others, are engaged in a dark and dangerous conspiracy."

"Viviana Radcliffe," returned Guy Fawkes, sternly, "you have once before avowed your knowledge of this plot. I will not attempt disguise with you. A project is in agitation for the deliverance of our fallen church; and, since you have become acquainted with its existence—no matter how—you must be bound by an oath of secrecy, or," and his look grew darker, and his voice sterner, "I will not answer for your life."

"I would willingly take the oath on certain conditions," said Viviana. "You must take it unconditionally," rejoined Fawkes.

"Hear me out," said Viviana. "Knowing that Mr. Catesby and Father Garnet are anxious to induce my father to join this conspiracy, I came hither to implore you to prevent him from doing so."

"Were I even willing to do this, which I am not," replied Fawkes, "I have not the power. Sir William Radcliffe would be justly indignant at any interference on my part."

"Heed not that," replied Viviana. "You, I fear, are linked to this fearful project beyond the possibility of being set free. But he is not. Save him! save him!"

"I will take no part in urging him to join it," replied Fawkes; "but I can promise nothing further."

"Then mark me," she returned; "if further attempts are made by any of your confederates to league him with their plot, I myself will disclose all I know of it."

"Viviana," rejoined Fawkes, "I again warn you that you endanger your life."

"I care not," she rejoined; "I would risk twenty lives, if I possessed them, to preserve my father."

"You are a noble-hearted lady," replied Fawkes, unable to repress the admiration inspired by her conduct; "and if I can accomplish what you desire, I will. But I see not how it can be done."

"Everything is possible to one of your resolution," replied Viviana.

"Well, well," replied Fawkes, a slight smile crossing his rugged features; "the effort at least shall be made."

"Thanks! thanks!" ejaculated Viviana; and, overcome by her emotion, she sank half-fainting into his arms.

While he held her thus, debating within himself whether to convey her to the house, Garnet and Catesby appeared at the other end of the avenue. Their surprise at the sight was extreme; nor was it less when Viviana, opening her eyes as they drew near, uttered a slight cry and disappeared.

"This requires an explanation," said Catesby, glancing fiercely at Fawkes.

"You must seek it, then, of the lady," rejoined the latter, moodily.

"It will be easily explained, I have no doubt," interposed Garnet.

"Viviana Radcliffe was seized with a momentary weakness, and her companion offered her support."

"That will scarcely suffice for me," cried Catesby.

"Let the subject be dropped for the present," rejoined Garnet, authoritatively. "More important matter claims our attention. We came to seek you, my son," he continued, addressing Fawkes. "All those engaged in the great enterprise are about to meet in a summer-house in the garden."

"I am ready to attend you," replied Fawkes. "Will Sir William Radcliffe be there?"

"No," replied Garnet; "he has not yet joined us. None will be present at this meeting but the sworn conspirators."

With this, the trio took their way towards the garden, and proceeding along a walk edged with clipped yew-trees, came to the summer-house,—a small circular building overrun with ivy and creepers, and ornamented in front by two stone statues on pedestals. Here they found Sir Everard Digby, Ambrose Rookwood, Francis Tresham

Thomas and Robert Winter, John and Christopher Wright, awaiting their arrival.

The door being closed and bolted, Garnet, placing himself in the midst of the assemblage, said,

"Before we proceed further, I will again administer the oath to all present." Drawing from his vest a primer, and addressing Sir Everard Digby, he desired him to kneel, and continued thus, in a solemn tone: "You shall swear by the Blessed Trinity, and by the sacrament you propose to receive, never to disclose, directly or indirectly, by word or circumstance, the matter that shall be proposed to you to keep secret, nor desist from the execution thereof until the rest shall give you leave."

"I swear," replied Digby, kissing the primer.

The oath was then taken in like manner by the others. This done, Catesby was about to address the meeting, when Tresham, glancing uneasily at the door, remarked,

"Are you assured we have no eavesdroppers?"

"I will keep watch without," rejoined Fawkes, "if you have any fears."

"It were better," replied Robert Winter. "We cannot be too cautious. But if you go forth, you will not be able to take part in the discussion."

"My part is to act, not talk," rejoined Fawkes, marching towards the door. And shutting it after him, he took up a position outside.

Upon this, Catesby commenced a long and inflammatory harangue, in which he expatiated with great eloquence and fervour on the wrongs of the Catholic party, and the deplorable condition of the Romish Church.

"It were easy to slay the tyrant by whom we are oppressed," he said, in conclusion; "but his destruction would be small gain to us. We must strike deeper, to hew down the baneful stock of heresy. All our adversaries must perish with him, and in such manner as shall best attest the vengeance of Heaven. Placed beneath the parliament-house, a mine of powder shall hurl its heretical occupants into the air, nor shall any one survive the terrible explosion. Are we all agreed to this plan?"

All the conspirators expressed their assent, except Sir Everard Digby.

"Before I give my concurrence to the measure," observed the latter, "I would fain be resolved by Father Garnet whether it is lawful to destroy some few of our own faith with so many heretics."

"Unquestionably, my son," replied Garnet. "As in besieging a city we have a right to kill all within it, whether friends or enemies, so in this case we are justified in destroying the innocent with the guilty, because their destruction will be advantageous to the Catholic cause."

"I am satisfied," replied Digby.

"As to the tyrant and apostate James," continued Garnet, "he is excommunicated and his subjects released from their allegiance. I have two briefes, sent over by his Holiness Pope Clement VIII. three years ago—one directed to the clergy, and the other to the nobility of the realm—wherein, alluding to Queen Elizabeth, it is expressly de-

clared that, 'so soon as that miserable woman should depart out of this life, none shall be permitted to ascend the throne, how near soever in proximity of blood, unless they are such as will not only tolerate the Catholic faith, but in every way support it.' By this brief James is expressly excluded. He has betrayed, not supported the Church of Rome. Having broken his word with us, and oppressed our brethren more rigorously even than his predecessor the remorseless Elizabeth, he is unworthy longer to reign, and must be removed."

"He must," reiterated the conspirators.

"The parliament-house being the place where all the mischief done us has been contrived by our adversaries, it is fitting that it should be the place of their chastisement," remarked Catesby.

"Doubtless," rejoined Ambrose Rookwood.

"Yet, if the blow we meditate should miscarry," observed Thomas Winter, "the injury to the Catholic religion will be so great, that not only our enemies, but our very friends will condemn us."

"There is no chance of miscarriage, if we are true to each other," returned Catesby, confidently. "And if I suspected any one of treachery, I would plunge my sword into his bosom, were he my brother."

"You would do wrong to act thus on mere suspicion," remarked Tresham, who stood near him.

"In a case like this, he who gave the slightest ground for doubt would merit death," replied Catesby, sternly; "and I would slay him."

"Hum!" exclaimed Tresham, uneasily.

"Catesby will now, perhaps, inform us what has been done to carry the project into effect?" inquired Sir Everard Digby.

"A small habitation has been taken by one of our confederates, Thomas Percy, immediately adjoining the parliament-house," replied Catesby, "from the cellar of which it is proposed to dig a mine through the wall of the devoted building, and to deposit within it a sufficient quantity of gunpowder, and other combustibles, to accomplish our purpose. This mine must be digged by ourselves, as we can employ no assistants, and will be a laborious and dangerous task. But I for one will cheerfully undertake it."

"And I," said the elder Wright.

"And I," cried several others.

"Supposing the mine digged, and the powder deposited," observed Ambrose Rookwood, "whose hand will fire the train?"

"Mine," cried Guy Fawkes, throwing open the door. As soon as he had spoken, he retired and closed it after him.

"He will keep his word," remarked Garnet. "He is of a nature so resolute that he would destroy himself with the victims rather than fail. Catiline was not a bolder conspirator than Guy Fawkes."

"Well, gentlemen," observed Catesby, "we are now at the latter end of July. All must be ready against the meeting of parliament in November."

"There is some likelihood, I hear, that the meeting of the house will be prorogued till February," remarked Tresham.

"So much the better," rejoined Catesby; "it will give us more time for preparation."

"So much the worse, I say," cried Ambrose Rookwood. "Delay are ever dangerous, and doubly dangerous in a case like ours."

"I am far from desiring to throw any impediment in the way of our design," observed Sir Everard Digby, "but I would recommend, before we proceed to this terrible extremity, that one last effort should be made to move the king in our behalf."

"It is useless," replied Catesby. "So far from toleration, he meditates severer measures against us; and, I am well assured, if parliament is allowed to meet, such laws will be passed as will bring all of us within premunire. No, no. We have no hope from James, or his ministers."

"Nor yet from France or Spain," observed Thomas Winter. "In my conference with the Constable Velasco, at Bergen, I received assurances of the good-will of Philip towards us, but no distinct promise of interference in our behalf. The Archduke Albert is well disposed towards us, but he can render no assistance. We must depend upon ourselves."

"Ay, marry must we," replied Catesby; "and fortunate is it that we have devised a plan by which we can accomplish our purpose unaided. We only require funds to follow up with effect the blow we shall strike."

"My whole fortune shall be placed at your disposal," replied Sir Everard Digby.

"Part of mine has already been given," said Tresham, "and the rest shall follow."

"Would I had aught to peril in the matter except my life!" said Catesby; "I would throw everything upon the stake."

"You do enough in venturing thus much, my son," rejoined Garnet. "To you the whole conduct of the enterprise is committed."

"I live for nothing else," replied Catesby; "and if I see it successful, I shall have lived long enough."

"Cannot Sir William Radcliffe be induced to join us?" asked Rookwood. "He would be an important acquisition, and his wealth would prove highly serviceable."

"I have sounded him," answered Catesby; "but he appears reluctant."

"Be not satisfied with one attempt," urged Christopher Wright. "The jeopardy in which he now stands may make him change his mind."

"I am loth to interrupt the discussion," returned Garnet, "but I think we have tarried here long enough. We will meet again at midnight, when I hope to introduce Sir William Radcliffe to you as a confederate."

The party then separated, and Garnet went in search of the knight.

Ascertaining that he was in his own chamber, he proceeded thither, and found him alone. Entering at once upon the subject in hand, Garnet pleaded his cause with so much zeal that he at last wrung a reluctant consent from the listener. Scarcely able to conceal his exultation, he then proposed to Sir William to adjourn with him to the private chapel in the house, where having taken the oath, and received the sacrament upon it, he should forthwith be introduced to the conspirators, and the whole particulars of the plot revealed to him. To this the knight with some hesitation agreed. As they traversed a *gallery leading to the chapel*, they met Viviana. For the first time in

his life, Radcliffe's gaze sank before his daughter, and he would have passed her without speaking had she not stopped him.

"Father! dear father!" she cried, "I know whither you are going—and for what purpose. Do not—do not join them!"

Sir William Radcliffe made no reply, but endeavoured gently to push her aside.

She would not, however, be repulsed, but prostrating herself before him, clasped his knees, and besought him not to proceed.

Making a significant gesture to Sir William, Garnet walked forward.

"Viviana," cried the knight, sternly, "my resolution is taken. I command you to retire to your chamber."

So saying, he broke from her and followed Garnet. Claspings her hands to her brow, Viviana gazed for a moment with a frenzied look after him, and then rushed from the gallery.

On reaching the chapel, Sir William, who had been much shaken by this meeting, was some minutes in recovering his composure. Garnet employed the time in renewing his arguments, and with so much address that he succeeded in quieting the scruples of conscience which had been awakened in the knight's breast by his daughter's warning.

"And now, my son," he said, "since you are determined to enrol your name in the list of those sworn to deliver their church from oppression, take this primer in your hand, and kneel down before the altar, while I administer the oath which is to unite you to us."

Garnet then advanced towards the altar, and Sir William was about to prostrate himself upon a cushion beside it, when the door was suddenly thrown open, and Guy Fawkes strode into the chapel.

"Hold!" he exclaimed, grasping Radcliffe's right arm, and fixing his dark glance upon him; "you shall not take that oath."

"What mean you?" cried Garnet, who, as well as the knight, was paralysed with astonishment at this intrusion. "Sir William Radcliffe is about to join us."

"I know it," replied Fawkes; "but it may not be. He has no heart in the business, and will lend it no efficient assistance. We are better without him than with him."

As he spoke, he took the primer from the knight's hand, and laid it upon the altar.

"This conduct is inexplicable," cried Garnet, angrily. "You will answer for it to others, as well as to me."

"I will answer for it to all," replied Guy Fawkes. "Let Sir William Radcliffe declare before me, and before Heaven, that he approves the measure, and I am content he should take the oath."

"I cannot belie my conscience by saying so," replied the knight, who appeared agitated by conflicting emotions.

"Yet you have promised to join us," cried Garnet, reproachfully.

"Better break that promise than a solemn oath," rejoined Guy Fawkes, sternly. "Sir William Radcliffe, there are reasons why you should not join this conspiracy. Examine your inmost heart, and it will tell you what they are."

"I understand you," replied the knight.

"Get hence," cried Garnet, unable to control his indignation, "or I will pronounce our church's most terrible malediction against you."

"I shall not shrink from it, father," rejoined Fawkes, humbly but firmly, "seeing I am acting rightly."

"Undeceive yourself, then, at once," returned Garnet, "and learn that you are thwarting our great and holy purpose."

"On the contrary," replied Fawkes, "I am promoting it, by preventing one from joining it who will endanger its success."

"You are a traitor!" cried Garnet, furiously.

"A traitor!" exclaimed Guy Fawkes, his eye blazing with fierce lustre, though his voice and demeanour were unaltered—"I, who have been warned thrice—twice by the dead, and lastly by a vision from Heaven, yet still remain firm to my purpose—I, who have voluntarily embraced the most dangerous and difficult part of the enterprise—I, who would suffer the utmost extremity of torture, rather than utter a word that should reveal it—I a traitor! No, father, I am none. If you think so, take this sword and at once put an end to your doubts."

There was something so irresistible in the manner of Guy Fawkes, that Garnet remained silent.

"Do with me what you please," continued Fawkes; "but do not compel Sir William Radcliffe to join the conspiracy. He will be fatal to it."

"No one shall compel me to join it," replied the knight.

"Perhaps it is better thus," returned Garnet, after a pause, during which he was buried in reflection. "I will urge you no further, my son. But before you depart you must swear not to divulge what you have just learnt."

"Willingly," replied the knight.

"There is another person who must also take that oath," said Guy Fawkes, "having accidentally become acquainted with as much as yourself."

And stepping out of the chapel, he immediately afterwards returned with Viviana.

"You will now understand why I would not allow Sir William to join the conspiracy," he observed to Garnet.

"I do," replied the latter, gloomily.

The oath administered, the knight and his daughter quitted the chapel, accompanied by Guy Fawkes. Viviana was profuse in her expressions of gratitude, nor was her father less earnest in his acknowledgments.

A few hours after this, Sir William Radcliffe informed Sir Everard Digby that it was his intention to depart immediately; and though the latter attempted to dissuade him, by representing the danger to which he would be exposed, he continued inflexible. The announcement surprised both Catesby and Garnet, who were present when it was made, and added their entreaties to those of Digby, but without effect. Catesby's proposal to serve as an escort was likewise refused by Sir William, who said he had no fears; and when questioned as to his destination, he returned an evasive answer. The sudden resolution of the knight, coupled with his refusal to join the plot, alarmed the conspirators, and more than one expressed fears of treachery. Sir Everard Digby, however, was not of the number, but asserted that Radcliffe was *man of the highest honour*, and he would answer for his secrecy with *life*.

"Will you answer for that of his daughter?" demanded Tresham.

"I will," replied Fawkes.

"To put the matter beyond a doubt," observed Catesby, "I will set out shortly after him, and follow him unobserved till he halts for the night, and ascertain whether he stops at any suspicious quarter."

"Do so, my son," replied Garnet.

"It is needless," observed Sir Everard Digby; "but do as you please."

By this time, Radcliffe's horses being brought round by Heydocke, he and his daughter took a hasty leave of their friends. When they had been gone a few minutes, Catesby called for his steed; and, after exchanging a word or two with Garnet, rode after them. He had proceeded about a couple of miles along a cross-road leading to Nantwich, which he learnt from some cottagers was the route taken by the party before him, when he heard the tramp of a horse in the rear, and turning at the sound, beheld Guy Fawkes. Drawing in the bridle, he halted till the latter came up, and angrily demanded on what errand he was bent.

"My errand is the same as your own," replied Fawkes. "I intend to follow Sir William Radcliffe, and, if need be, defend him."

Whatever Catesby's objections might be to this companionship, he did not think fit to declare them; and, though evidently much displeased, suffered Guy Fawkes to ride by his side without opposition.

Having gained the summit of the mountainous range extending from Malpas to Tottenhall, whence they beheld the party whose course they were tracking enter a narrow lane at the foot of the hill, Catesby, fearful of losing sight of them, set spurs to his steed. Guy Fawkes kept close beside him, and they did not slacken their pace until they reached the lane.

Having proceeded along it for a quarter of a mile, they were alarmed by the sudden report of fire-arms, followed by a loud shriek, which neither of them doubted was uttered by Viviana. Again dashing forward, on turning a corner of the road, they beheld the party surrounded by half-a-dozen troopers. Sir William Radcliffe had shot one of his assailants, and, assisted by Heydocke, was defending himself bravely against the others. With loud shouts, Catesby and Guy Fawkes galloped towards the scene of strife. But they were too late. A bullet pierced the knight's brain; and he no sooner fell, than, regardless of himself, the old steward flung away his sword, and threw himself, with the most piteous lamentations, on the body.

Viviana, meanwhile, had been compelled to dismount, and was in the hands of the troopers. On seeing her father's fate, her shrieks were so heart-piercing that even her captors were moved to compassion. Fighting his way towards her, Catesby cut down one of the troopers, and snatching her from the grasp of the other, who was terrified by the furious assault, placed her on the saddle beside him, and, striking spurs into his charger at the same moment, leapt the hedge, and made good his retreat.

This daring action, however, could not have been accomplished without the assistance of Guy Fawkes, who warded off with his rapier all the blows aimed at him and his lovely charge. While thus engaged, Fawkes received a severe cut on the head, which stretched him senseless and bleeding beneath his horse's feet.

CHAPTER XIII.—THE PACKET.

ON recovering from the effects of the wound he had received from the trooper, Guy Fawkes found himself stretched upon a small bed in a cottage with Viviana and Catesby watching beside him. A thick fold of linen was bandaged round his head; and he was so faint from the great effusion of blood he had sustained, that, after gazing vacantly around him for a few minutes, and but imperfectly comprehending what he beheld, his eyes closed, and he relapsed into insensibility. Restoratives being applied, he revived in a short time; and, in answer to his inquiries as to how he came thither, was informed by Catesby that he had been left for dead by his assailants, who, contenting themselves with making the old steward prisoner, had ridden off in the direction of Chester.

"What has become of Sir William Radcliffe?" asked the wounded man, in a feeble voice.

Catesby raised his finger to his lips, and Fawkes learnt the distressing nature of the question he had asked by the agonising cry that burst from Viviana. Unable to control her grief, she withdrew, and Catesby then told him that the body of Sir William Radcliffe was lying in an adjoining cottage, whither it had been transported from the scene of the conflict; adding that it was Viviana's earnest desire that it should be conveyed to Manchester, to the family vault in the collegiate church, but that he feared her wish could not be safely complied with. A messenger, however, had been despatched to Holt; and Sir Everard Digby and Fathers Garnet and Oldcorne were momentarily expected, when some course would be decided upon for the disposal of the unfortunate knight's remains.

"Poor Viviana!" groaned Fawkes. "She has now no protector."

"Rest easy on that score," rejoined Catesby. "She shall never want while I live."

The wounded man fixed his eyes, now blazing with red and unnatural light, inquiringly upon him, but he said nothing.

"I know what you mean," continued Catesby; "you think I shall wed her, and you are in the right—I shall. The marriage is essential to our enterprise, and the only obstacle to it is removed."

Fawkes attempted to reply, but his parched tongue refused its office. Catesby arose, and carefully raising his head, held a cup of water to his lips. The sufferer eagerly drained it, and would have asked for more; but seeing that the request would be refused, he left it unuttered.

"Have you examined my wound?" he said, after a pause.

Catesby answered in the affirmative.

"And do you judge it mortal?" continued Fawkes. "Not that I have any fear of Death—I have looked him in the face too often for *that*—but I have somewhat on my mind which I would fain discharge before my earthly pilgrimage is ended."

"Do not delay it, then," rejoined the other. "Knowing I speak to soldier, and a brave one, I do not hesitate to tell you your hours are numbered."

"Heaven's will be done!" exclaimed Fawkes, in a tone of resignation.

"I thought myself destined to be one of the chief instruments of the restoration of our holy religion; but I find I was mistaken. When Father Garnet arrives, I beseech you let me see him instantly. Or, if he should not come speedily, entreat Miss Radcliffe to grant me a few moments in private."

"Why not unburden yourself to me?" returned Catesby, distrustfully. "In your circumstances I should desire no better confessor than a brother soldier—no other crucifix than a sword-hilt."

"Nor I," rejoined Fawkes. "But this is no confession I am about to make. What I have to say relates to others, not to myself."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Catesby. "Then there is the more reason why it should not be deferred. I hold it my duty to tell you that the fever of your wound will, in all probability, produce delirium. Make your communication while your senses remain to you. And whatever you enjoin shall be rigorously fulfilled."

"Will you swear this?" cried Fawkes, eagerly. But before an answer could be returned, he added, in an altered tone, "No,—no,—it cannot be."

"This is no time for anger," rejoined Catesby, sternly, "or I should ask whether you doubt the assurance I have given you?"

"I doubt nothing but your compliance with my request," returned Fawkes. "And oh! if you hope to be succoured at your hour of need, tell Miss Radcliffe I desire to speak with her."

"The message will not need to be conveyed," said Viviana, who had noiselessly entered the room; "she is here."

Guy Fawkes turned his gaze in the direction of the voice; and, notwithstanding his own deplorable condition, he was filled with concern at the change wrought in her appearance by the terrible shock she had undergone. Her countenance was as pale as death—her eyes, from which no tears would flow, as is ever the case with the deepest distress, were glassy and lustreless—her luxuriant hair hung in dishevelled masses over her shoulders, and her attire was soiled and disordered.

"You desire to speak with me?" she continued, advancing towards the couch of the wounded man.

"It must be alone," he replied.

Viviana glanced at Catesby, who reluctantly arose, and closed the door after him. "We are alone now," she said.

"Water! water!" gasped the sufferer, "or I perish. His request being complied with, he continued in a low solemn voice: "Viviana, you have lost the dearest friend you had on earth, and you will soon lose one who, if he had been spared, would have endeavoured, as far as he could, to repair the loss. I say not this to aggravate your distress, but to prove the sincerity of my regard. Let me conjure you, with my dying breath, not to wed Mr. Catesby."

"Fear it not," replied Viviana. "I would rather endure death than consent to do so."

"Be upon your guard against him, then," continued Fawkes. "When an object is to be gained, he suffers few scruples to stand in his way."

"I am well aware of it," replied Viviana; "and on the arrival of Sir Everard Digby, I shall place myself under his protection."

"Should you be driven to extremity," said Fawkes, taking a small

packet from the folds of his doublet, "break open this; it will inform you what to do. Only promise me you will not have recourse to it till all other means have failed."

Viviana took the packet, and gave the required promise.

"Conceal it about your person, and guard it carefully," continued Fawkes; "for you know not when you may require it. And now, having cleared my conscience, I can die easily. Let me have your prayers."

Viviana knelt down by the bedside, and poured forth the most earnest supplications in his behalf.

"Perhaps," she said, as she arose—"and it is some consolation to think so—you may be saved by death from the commission of a great crime, which would for ever have excluded you from the joys of heaven."

"Say, rather," cried Guy Fawkes, whose brain began to wander, "which would have secured them to me. Others will achieve it; but I shall have no share in their glory, or their reward."

"Their reward will be perdition in this world and the next," rejoined Viviana. "I repeat, that though I deeply deplore your condition, I rejoice in your delivery from this sin. It is better, far better, to die thus, than by the hands of the common executioner."

"What do I see?" cried Guy Fawkes, trying to raise himself, and sinking back again instantly upon the pillow. "Elizabeth Orton rises before me. She beckons me after her—I come!—I come!"

"Heaven pity him!" cried Viviana; "his senses have left him."

"She leads me into a gloomy cavern," continued Fawkes, more wildly; "but my eyes are like the wolf's, and can penetrate the darkness. It is filled with barrels of gunpowder. I see them ranged in tiers, one above another. Ah! I know where I am now: it is the vault beneath the parliament-house. The king and his nobles are assembled in the hall above. Lend me a torch, that I may fire the train, and blow them into the air. Quick! quick! I have sworn their destruction, and will keep my oath. What matter if I perish with them? Give me the torch, I say, or it will be too late. Is the powder damp, that it will not kindle? And see, the torch is expiring—it is gone out! Distraction!—to be baffled thus! Why do you stand and glare at me with your stony eyes? Who are those with you? Fiends!—no! they are armed men. They seize me—they drag me before a grave assemblage. What is that hideous engine? The rack!—bind me on it—break every limb—ye shall not force me to confess—ha! ha! I laugh at your threats—ha! ha!"

"Mother of mercy, release him from this torture!" cried Viviana.

"So ye have condemned me," continued Fawkes, "and will drag me to execution. Well, well, I am prepared. But what a host is assembled to see me! Ten thousand faces are turned towards me, and all with one abhorrent bloodthirsty expression. And what a scaffold! Get it done quickly, thou butcherly villain. The rope is twisted round my throat in serpent folds. It strangles me—ah!"

"Horror!" exclaimed Viviana. "I can listen to this no longer.

Help, Mr. Catesby, help!"

*"The knife is at my breast—it pierces my flesh—my heart is torn—*I die! I die!" and he uttered a dreadful groan.

"What has happened?" cried Catesby, rushing into the room. "I lead?"

"I fear so," replied Viviana; "and his end has been a fearful one."

"No—no," said Catesby, "his pulse still beats—but fiercely and feverishly. You had better not remain here longer, Miss Radcliffe. I will watch over him. All will soon be over."

Aware that she could be of no further use, Viviana cast a look of the deepest commiseration at the sufferer, and retired. The occupant of the cottage, an elderly female, had surrendered all the apartments of her tenement, except one small room, to her guests, and she was therefore undisturbed. The terrible event which had recently occurred, and the harrowing scene she had just witnessed, were too much for Viviana; and her anguish was so intense, that she began to fear her reason was deserting her. She stood still, gazed fearfully round, as if some secret danger environed her—clasped her hands to her temples, and found them burning like hot iron—and then, alarmed at her own state, knelt down, prayed, and wept. Yes, she wept for the first time since her father's destruction, and the relief afforded by those scalding tears was inexpressible.

From this piteous state she was aroused by the tramp of horses at the door of the cottage, and the next moment Father Garnet presented himself.

"How uncertain are human affairs!" he said, after a sorrowful greeting had passed between them. "I little thought, when we parted yesterday, we should meet again so soon, and under such afflicting circumstances."

"It is the will of Heaven, father," replied Viviana, "and we must not murmur at its decrees, but bear our chastening as we best may."

"I am happy to find you in such a comfortable frame of mind, dear daughter. I feared the effect of the shock upon your feelings, but I am glad to find you bear up against it so well."

"I am surprised at my own firmness, father," replied Viviana. "But I have been schooled in affliction. I have no tie left to bind me to the world, and shall retire from it not only without regret, but with eagerness."

"Say not so, dear daughter," replied Garnet. "You have, I trust, much happiness in store for you; and when the sharpness of your affliction is worn off, you will view your condition in a more cheering light."

"Impossible!" she cried, mournfully; "hope is wholly extinct in my breast. But I will not contest the point. Is not Sir Everard Digby with you?"

"He is not, daughter," replied Garnet, "and I will explain to you wherefore. Soon after your departure yesterday, the mansion we occupied at Holt was attacked by a band of soldiers, headed by Miles Topcliffe, one of the most unrelenting of our persecutors; and though they were driven off with some loss, yet, as there was every reason to apprehend they would return with fresh force, Sir Everard judged it prudent to retreat; and accordingly he and his friends, with all their attendants, except those he has sent with me, have departed for Buckinghamshire."

"Where, then, is Father Oldcorne?" inquired Viviana.

"Alas! daughter," rejoined Garnet, "I grieve to say he is a prisoner *imprudently exposing himself during the attack, he was seized and carried off by Topcliffe and his myrmidons.*"

"How true is the saying, that misfortunes never come single!" sighed Viviana. "I seem bereft of all I hold dear."

"Sir Everard has sent four of his trustiest servants with me," remarked Garnet; "they are well armed, and will attend you wherever you choose to lead them. He has also furnished me with a sum of money for your use."

"He is most kind and considerate," replied Viviana. "And now, father," she faltered, "there is one subject which it is necessary to speak upon; and, though I shrink from it, it must not be postponed."

"I guess what you mean, daughter," said Garnet, sympathisingly; "you allude to the interment of Sir William Radcliffe. Is the body here?"

"It is in an adjoining cottage," replied Viviana, in a broken voice. "I have already expressed my wish to Mr. Catesby to have it conveyed to Manchester, to our family vault."

"I see not how that can be accomplished, dear daughter," replied Garnet; "but I will confer with Mr. Catesby on the subject. Where is he?"

"In the next room, by the couch of Guy Fawkes, who is dying," said Viviana.

"Dying!" echoed Garnet, starting; "I heard he was dangerously hurt, but did not suppose the wound would prove fatal. Here is another grievous blow to the good cause."

At this moment the door was opened by Catesby.

"How is the sufferer?" asked Garnet.

"A slight change for the better appears to have taken place," answered Catesby; "his fever has in some degree abated, and he has sunk into a gentle slumber."

"Can he be removed with safety?" inquired Garnet; "for I fear if he remains here he will fall into the hands of Topcliffe and his crew, who are scouring the country in every direction." And he recapitulated all he had just stated to Viviana.

Catesby was for some time lost in reflection.

"I am fairly perplexed as to what course it will be best to pursue," he said. "Dangers and difficulties beset us on every side. I am inclined to yield to Viviana's request, and proceed to Manchester."

"That will be rushing into the very face of danger," observed Garnet.

"And therefore may be the safest plan," replied Catesby. "Our adversaries will scarcely suspect us of so desperate a step."

"Perhaps you are in the right, my son," returned Garnet, after a moment's reflection. "At all events, I bow to your judgment."

"The plan is too much in accordance with my own wishes to meet with any opposition on my part," observed Viviana.

"Will you accompany us, father?" asked Catesby, "or do you proceed to Gothurst?"

"I will go with you, my son. Viviana will need a protector; and, till I have seen her in some place of safety, I will not leave her."

"Since we have come to this determination," rejoined Catesby, "as soon as the needful preparations can be made, and Guy Fawkes has had some hours' repose, we will set out. Under cover of night we can travel with security; and, by using some exertion, may reach Ordsall all, whither, I presume, Viviana would choose to proceed in the instance, before daybreak."

man well mounted, and so are my attendants," replied Garnet; "by the provident care of Sir Everard Digby, each of them has a horse with him."

"It is well," said Catesby. "And now, Viviana, may I entreat you to take my place for a short time by the couch of the sufferer. In our hands everything shall be in readiness."

When retired with Garnet, while Viviana proceeded to the adjoining chamber, where she found Guy Fawkes still slumbering tranquilly. As the evening advanced, he awoke, and appeared much refreshed. As he was speaking, Garnet and Catesby approached his bedside, and seemed overjoyed at the sight of the former. The subject of the conversation being mentioned to him, he at once expressed his ready compliance with the arrangement, and only desired that the last rites of religion might be performed for him before he set out.

Catesby informed him that he came for that very purpose; and as they were left alone, he proceeded to the discharge of his duties, confessed and absolved him, giving him the viaticum and extreme unction. And, lastly, he judged it expedient to administer a powerful opiate, to lull the pain of his wound on the

man done, he summoned Catesby, who, with two of the attendants, carried the couch on which the wounded man was stretched, and conveyed it to the litter. So well was this managed, that Fawkes sustained no injury, and little inconvenience, from the movement. Two country vehicles had been procured; the one containing the wounded man's litter, the other the shell, which had been hastily put up to hold the remains of the unfortunate Sir William Radcliffe. The litter being placed in the saddle, and Catesby having liberally rewarded the cottagers who had afforded them shelter, the little cavalcade was put in motion. In this way they journeyed through the country, and shaping their course through Tarporley, Northwich, and Warrington, arrived at daybreak in the neighbourhood of Ordsall Hall.

CHAPTER XIV.—THE ELIXIR.

As he gazed on the well-remembered roof and gables of the old mansion, he felt from out the grove of trees in which it was embosomed, his heart died away within her. The thought that her father, who so recently quitted it in the full enjoyment of health and of the world's blessing, should be so soon brought back a corpse, was too agonising for endurance. Reflecting, however, that this was the only chance for the indulgence of grief, but that she was called upon to be firm, she bore up resolutely against her emotion. As he stood within a short distance of the hall, Catesby caused the little party to halt under the shelter of the trees, while he rode forward to ascertain that they could safely approach it. As he drew near, every one exclaimed that the hand of the spoiler had been there. Crossing the stone bridge, he entered the court, which bore abundant marks of the destruction recently committed. Various articles of furniture, broken, or otherwise destroyed, were lying scattered about. The glass windows were shattered; the doors forced from their hinges; the

stone copings of the walls pushed off; the flower-beds trampled upon; the moat itself was in some places choked up with rubbish, while in others its surface was covered with floating pieces of timber.

Led by curiosity, Catesby proceeded to the spot where the stables had stood. Nothing but a heap of blackened ruins met his gaze. Scarcely one stone was standing on another. The appearance of the place was so desolate and disheartening, that he turned away instantly. Leaving his horse in a shed, he entered the house. Here, again, he encountered fresh ravages. The oak panels and skirting-boards were torn from the walls; the ceilings pulled down; and the floor lay inch-deep in broken plaster and dust. On ascending to the upper rooms, he found the same disorder. The banisters of the stairs were broken; the bedsteads destroyed; the roof partially untiled. Every room was thickly strewn with leaves torn from valuable books, with fragments of apparel, and other articles, which the searchers, not being able to carry off, had wantonly destroyed.

Having contemplated this scene of havoc for some time with feelings of the bitterest indignation, Catesby descended to the lowest story; and, after searching ineffectually for the domestics, was about to depart, when, turning suddenly, he perceived a man watching him from an adjoining room. Catesby instantly called to him; but, seeing that the fellow disregarded his assurances, and was about to take to his heels, he drew his sword, and threatened him with severe punishment if he attempted to fly. Thus exhorted, the man—who was no other than the younger Heydocke—advanced towards him; and throwing himself at his feet, begged him in the most piteous terms to do him no injury.

"I have already told you I am a friend," replied Catesby, sheathing his sword.

"Ah, Mr. Catesby, is it you I behold?" cried Martin Heydocke, whose fears had hitherto prevented him from noticing the features of the intruder. "What brings your worship to this ill-fated house?"

"First let me know if there is any enemy about?" replied Catesby.

"None that I am aware of," rejoined Martin. "Having ransacked the premises, and done all the mischief they could, as you perceive, the miscreants departed the day before yesterday; and I have seen nothing of them since, though I have been constantly on the watch. The only alarm I have had was that occasioned by your worship just now."

"Are you alone here?" demanded Catesby.

"No, your worship," answered Martin. "There are several of the servants concealed in a secret passage under the house. But they are so terrified by what has lately happened, that they never dare show themselves except during the night-time."

"I do not wonder at it," replied Catesby.

"And now may I inquire whether your worship brings any tidings of Sir William Radcliffe and Mistress Viviana?" rejoined Martin. "I hope no ill has befallen them. My father, old Jerome Heydocke, set out to Holywell a few days ago, to apprise them of their danger, and I have not heard of them since."

"Sir William Radcliffe is dead," replied Catesby. "The villains have ordered him. Your father is a prisoner."

"Alas! alas!" cried the young man, bursting into tears, "these are fearful times to live in. What will become of us all!"

"We must rise against the oppressor," replied Catesby, sternly; "bite the heel that tramples upon us."

"We must," rejoined Martin. "And if my poor arm could avail, it should not be slow to strike."

"Manfully resolved!" cried Catesby, who never lost an opportunity of gaining a proselyte. "I will point out to you a way by which you may accomplish what you desire. But we will talk of this hereafter. Hoard up your vengeance till the fitting moment for action arrives."

He then proceeded to explain to the young man, who was greatly surprised by the intelligence, that Viviana was at hand, and that the body of Sir William had been brought thither for interment in the family vault at the collegiate church. Having ascertained that there was a chamber which, having suffered less than the others, might serve for Viviana's accommodation, Catesby returned to the party.

A more melancholy cavalcade has been seldom seen than now approached the gates of Ordsall Hall. First rode Viviana, in an agony of tears, for her grief had by this time become absolutely uncontrollable, with Catesby on foot, leading her horse. Next came Garnet, greatly exhausted and depressed, his eyes cast dejectedly on the ground. Then came the litter, containing Guy Fawkes; and, lastly, the vehicle with the body of Sir William Radcliffe. On arriving at the gate, Viviana was met by two female servants, whom Martin Heydocke had summoned from their hiding-places; and, as soon as she had dismounted, she was supported, for she was scarcely able to walk unaided, to the chamber destined for her reception. This done, Catesby proceeded, with some anxiety, to superintend the removal of Fawkes, who was perfectly insensible. His wound had bled considerably during the journey, but the effusion had stopped when the faintness supervened. He was placed in one of the lower rooms till a sleeping-chamber could be prepared for him. The last task was to attend to the remains of the late unfortunate possessor of the mansion. By Catesby's directions, a large oak table, once occupying the great hall, was removed to the Star Chamber, already described as the principal room of the house; and, being securely propped up—for, like the rest of the furniture, it had been much damaged by the spoilers, though, being of substantial material, it offered greater resistance to their efforts—the shell containing the body was placed upon it.

"Better he should lie thus," exclaimed Catesby, when the melancholy office was completed, "than live to witness the wreck around him. Fatal as are these occurrences," he added, pursuing the train of thought suggested by the scene, "they are yet favourable to my purpose. The only person who could have prevented my union with Viviana Radcliffe—her father—lies there. Who would have thought, when she rejected my proposals a few days ago in this very room, how fortune would conspire—and by what dark and inscrutable means—to bring it about! Fallen as it is, this house is not yet fallen so low but I can reinstate it. Its young mistress mine, her estates mine—for she is now inheritress of all her father's possessions—the utmost reach of my ambition were gained, and all but one object of my life—for which I have dared so much, and struggled so long—achieved!"

"What are you thinking of, my son?" asked Garnet, who had watched the changing expression of his sombre countenance; "what are you thinking of?" he said, tapping him on the shoulder.

"Of that which is never absent from my thoughts, father—the great design," replied Catesby; "and of the means of its accomplishment which this sad scene suggests."

"I do not understand you, my son," rejoined the other.

"Does not Radcliffe's blood cry aloud for vengeance?" continued Catesby; "and think you his child will be deaf to the cry? No, father, she will no longer tamely submit to wrongs that would steel the gentlest bosom, and make firm the feeblest arm, but will go hand and heart with us in our project. Viviana must be mine," he added, altering his tone; "ours, I should say; for if she is mine, all the vast possessions that have accrued to her by her father's death shall be devoted to the furtherance of the mighty enterprise."

"I cannot think she will refuse you now, my son," replied Garnet.

"She *shall* not refuse me, father," rejoined Catesby. "The time is gone by for idle wooing."

"I will be no party to forcible measures, my son," returned Garnet, gravely. "As far as persuasion goes, I will lend you every assistance in my power, but nothing further."

"Persuasion is all that will be required, I am assured, father," answered Catesby, hastily, perceiving he had committed himself too far. "But let us now see what can be done for Guy Fawkes."

"Would there were any hope of his life!" exclaimed Garnet, sighing deeply. "In losing him, we lose the bravest of our band."

"We do," returned Catesby; "and yet he has been subject to strange fancies of late."

"He has been appalled, but never shaken," rejoined Garnet. "Of all our number, you and he were the only two upon whom I could rely. When he is gone, you will stand alone."

Catesby made no reply, but led the way to the chamber where the wounded man lay. He had regained his consciousness, but was too feeble to speak. After such restoratives as were at hand had been administered, Catesby was about to order a room to be fitted up for him, when Viviana, whose anxiety for the sufferer had overcome her affliction, made her appearance. On learning Catesby's intentions, she insisted on Fawkes being removed to the room allotted to her, which had not been dismantled like the rest. Seeing it was in vain to oppose her, Catesby assented; and the sufferer was accordingly carried thither and placed within the bed—a large antique piece of furniture, hung with faded damask curtains. The room was one of the oldest in the house, and at the further end stood a small closet, approached by an arched doorway, and fitted up with a hassock and crucifix, which, strange to say, had escaped the ravages of the searchers.

Placed within the couch, Guy Fawkes began to ramble as before *about the conspiracy*; and fearing his ravings might awaken the *suspicion of the servants*, Catesby would not suffer any of them to *come near him*, but arranged with Garnet to keep watch over him by *turns*. By degrees, he became more composed; and, after dozing a *little*, opened his eyes, and looking round, inquired anxiously for his *friend*. At first, Catesby, who was alone with him at the time

hesitated in his answer; but seeing he appeared greatly disturbed, he showed him that his hat, gauntlets, and rapier, were lying by the bedside.

"I am content," replied the wounded man, smiling faintly; "that sword has never left my side, waking or sleeping, for twenty years. Let me grasp it once more—perhaps for the last time."

Catesby handed him the weapon. He looked at it for a few moments, and pressed the blade to his lips.

"Farewell, old friend!" he said, a tear gathering in his eye; "farewell! Catesby," he added, as he resigned the weapon to him, "I have one request to make. Let my sword be buried with me."

"It shall," replied Catesby, in a voice suffocated by emotion, for the request touched him where his stern nature was most accessible: "I will place it by you myself."

"Thanks!" exclaimed Fawkes; and soon after this he again fell into a slumber.

His sleep endured for some hours; but his breathing grew fainter and fainter, so that at the last it was scarcely perceptible. A striking change had likewise taken place in his countenance, and these signs convinced Catesby that he had not long to live. While he was watching him with great anxiety, Viviana appeared at the door of the chamber, and beckoned him out. Noiselessly obeying the summons, and following her along the gallery, he entered a room where he found Garnet.

"I have called you to say that a remedy has been suggested to me by Martin Heydocke," observed Viviana, "by which, I trust, Guy Fawkes may yet be saved."

"How?" asked Catesby, eagerly.

"Doctor Dee, the warden of Manchester, of whom you must have heard," she continued, "is said to possess an elixir of such virtue, that a few drops of it will snatch him who drinks them from the very jaws of death."

"I should not have suspected you of so much credulity, Viviana," replied Catesby; "but grant that Doctor Dee possesses this marvellous elixir—which for my own part I doubt—how are we to obtain it?"

"If you will repair to the college and see him, I doubt not he will give it you," rejoined Viviana.

Catesby smiled incredulously.

"I have a claim on Doctor Dee," she persisted, "which I have never enforced. I will now use it. Show him this token," she continued, detaching a small ornament from her neck; "tell him you bring it from me, and I am sure he will comply with your request."

"Your commands shall be obeyed, Viviana," replied Catesby; "but I frankly confess I have no faith in the remedy."

"It is at least worth the trial, my son," observed Garnet. "Doctor Dee is a wonderful person, and has made many discoveries in medicine, as in other sciences; and this marvellous specific may, for aught we know, turn out no imposture."

"If such is your opinion," replied Catesby, "I will set out at once. If it is to be tried at all, it must be without delay. The poor sufferer is sinking fast."

"Go, then," cried Viviana, "and Heaven speed your mission!"

you could prevail upon Doctor Dee to visit the wounded man in person, I should prefer it. Besides, I have another request to make of him—but that will do hereafter. Lose not a moment now."

"I will fly on the wings of the wind," replied Catesby. "Heaven grant that, when I return, the object of our solicitude may not be past all human aid!"

With this he hurried to an outbuilding in which the horses were placed, and choosing the strongest and fleetest from out their number, mounted, and started at full gallop in the direction of Manchester; nor did he relax his speed until he reached the gates of the ancient college. Hanging the bridle of his smoking steed to a hook in the wall, he crossed the large quadrangular court; and finding the principal entrance open, passed the lofty room now used as the refectory, ascended the flight of stone stairs that conducts the modern visitor to the library, and was traversing the long galleries communicating with it, and now crowded with the learning of ages, bequeathed by the benevolence of his rival, Humphrey Chetham, when he encountered a grave but crafty-looking personage, in a loose brown robe and Polish cap, who angrily demanded his business.

Apologising for the intrusion, Catesby was about to explain, when a small oak door near them was partly opened, and an authoritative voice from within exclaimed,

"Do not hinder him, Kelley; I know his business, and will see him."

The seer made no further remark, but pointing to the door, Catesby at once comprehended that it was Dee's voice he had heard; and, though somewhat startled by the intimation that he was expected, entered the room. He found the doctor surrounded by his magical apparatus, and slowly returning to the chair he had just quitted.

Without looking behind him to see whom he addressed, Dee continued, "I have just consulted my Show Stone, and know why you are come hither. You bring a token from Viviana Radcliffe."

"I do," replied Catesby, in increased astonishment. "It is here."

"It is needless to produce it," replied Dee, still keeping his back towards him; "I have seen it already. Kelley," he continued, "I am about to set out for Ordsall Hall immediately. You must accompany me."

"Amazement!" cried Catesby. "Is the purpose of my visit, then, really known to your reverence?"

"You shall hear," rejoined Dee, facing him. "You have a friend who is at the point of death, and having heard that I possess an elixir of wonderful efficacy, are come in quest of it."

"True," replied Catesby, utterly confounded.

"The name of that friend," pursued Dee, regarding him, fixedly, "is Guy Fawkes—your own, Robert Catesby."

"I need no more to convince me, reverend sir," rejoined Catesby, trembling in spite of himself, "that all I have heard of your wonderful powers falls far short of the truth."

"You are but just in time," replied Dee, bowing gravely in acknowledgment of the compliment. "Another hour, and it would have been too late."

"Then you think he will live?" cried Catesby, eagerly.

"I am sure of it," replied Dee, "provided——"

"Provided what?" interrupted Catesby. "Is there aught I can do to insure his recovery?"

"No," replied Dee, sternly. "I am debating within myself whether it is worth while reviving him for a more dreadful fate."

"What mean you, reverend sir?" asked Catesby, a shade passing over his countenance.

"You understand my meaning, and therefore need no explanation," replied Dee. "Return to Ordsall Hall, and tell Miss Radcliffe I will be there in an hour. Bid her have no further fear. If the wounded man breathes when I arrive, I will undertake to cure him. Add, further, that I know the other request she desires to make of me, and that it is granted before it is asked. Farewell, sir, for a short time."

On reaching the court, Catesby expanded his chest, shook his limbs, and exclaimed, "At length I breathe freely! The atmosphere of that infernal chamber smelt so horribly of sulphur that it almost stifled me. Well, if Doctor Dee has not dealings with the devil, man never had! However, if he cures Guy Fawkes, I care not whence the medicine comes from."

As he descended Smithy Bank, and was about to cross the old bridge over the Irwell, he perceived a man riding before him, who seemed anxious to avoid him. Struck by this person's manner, he urged his horse into a quicker pace, and, being the better mounted of the two, soon overtook him, when to his surprise he found it was Martin Heydocke.

"What are you doing here, sirrah?" he demanded.

"I have been sent by Mistress Viviana with a message to Mr. Humphrey Chetham," replied the young man, in great confusion.

"Indeed!" exclaimed Catesby, angrily. "And how dared you convey a message to him without consulting me on the subject?"

"I was not aware you were my master," replied Martin, sulkily. "If I owe obedience to any one, it is to Mr. Chetham, whose servant I am. But if Mistress Viviana gives me a message to deliver, I will execute her commands, whoever may be pleased or displeased."

"I did but jest, thou saucy knave," returned Catesby, who did not desire to offend him. "Here is a piece of money for thee. Now, if it be no secret, what was Miss Radcliffe's message to thy master?"

"I know not what her letter contained," replied Martin; "but his answer was, that he would come to the hall at midnight."

"It is well I ascertained this," thought Catesby; and he added aloud, "I understood your master had been arrested and imprisoned?"

"So he was," replied Martin; "but he had interest enough with the commissioners to procure his liberation."

"Enough," replied Catesby; and striking spurs into his charger, he dashed off.

A quarter of an hour's hard riding brought him to the hall, and on arriving there he proceeded at once to the wounded man's chamber, where he found Viviana and Garnet.

"Have you succeeded in your errand?" cried the former, eagerly.

"Will Doctor Dee come, or has he sent the elixir?"

"He will bring it himself," replied Catesby.

Viviana uttered an exclamation of joy; and the sound appeared to reach the ears of the sufferer, for he stirred, and groaned faintly.

"Doctor Dee desired me to tell you," continued Catesby, drawing Viviana aside, and speaking in a low tone, "that your other request was granted."

Viviana looked surprised, and as if she did not clearly understand him.

"Might he not refer to Humphrey Chetham?" remarked Catesby, somewhat maliciously.

"Ah! you have learnt from Martin Heydocke that I have written to him," returned Viviana, blushing deeply. "What I was about to ask of Doctor Dee had no reference to Humphrey Chetham. It was to request permission to privately inter my father's remains in our family vault in the collegiate church. But how did he know I had any request to make?"

"That passes my comprehension," replied Catesby, "unless he obtained his information from his familiar spirits."

Shortly after this, Dr. Dee and Kelley arrived at the hall. Catesby met them at the gate, and conducted them to the wounded man's chamber. Coldly saluting Garnet, whom he eyed with suspicion, and bowing respectfully to Viviana, the doctor slowly advanced to the bedside. He gazed for a short time at the wounded man, and folded his arms thoughtfully upon his breast. The eyes of the sufferer were closed, and his lips slightly apart, but no breath seemed to issue from them. His bronzed complexion had assumed the ghastly hue of death, and his strongly-marked features had become fixed and rigid. His black hair, stiffened and caked with blood, escaped from the bandages around his head, and hung in elf-locks on the pillow. It was a piteous spectacle; and Doctor Dee appeared much moved by it.

"The worst is over," he muttered: "why recal the spirit to its wretched tenement?"

"If you can save him, reverend sir, do not hesitate," implored Viviana.

"I am come hither for that purpose," replied Dee; "but I must have no other witness to the experiment except yourself, and my attendant Kelley."

"I do not desire to be present, reverend sir," replied Viviana; "but I will retire into that closet, and pray that your remedy may prevail."

"My prayers for the same end shall be offered in the adjoining room," observed Garnet; and taking Catesby's arm, who seemed spell-bound by curiosity, he dragged him away.

The door closed, and Viviana withdrew into the closet, where she knelt down before the crucifix. Doctor Dee seated himself on the bedside; and taking a gourd-shaped bottle filled with a clear sparkling liquid from beneath his robe, he raised it to his eyes with his left hand, while he placed his right on the wrist of the wounded man. In this attitude he continued for a few seconds, while Kelley, with his arms folded, likewise kept his gaze fixed on the phial. At the expiration of that time, Dee, who had apparently counted the pulsations of the sufferer, took out the glass-stopper from the bottle, the contents of which diffused a pungent odour around, and wetting a small piece of linen *with it, applied it to his temples.* He then desired Kelley to raise his head, and poured a few drops down his throat. This done, he waited a few minutes, and repeated the application.

"Look!" he cried to Kelley. "The elixir already begins to operate. His chest heaves; his limbs shiver. That flush upon the cheek, and that dampness on the brow, denote that the animal heat is restored. A third draught will accomplish the cure."

"I can already feel his heart palpitate," observed Kelley, placing his hand on the patient's breast.

"Heaven be praised!" ejaculated Viviana, who had suspended her devotions to listen.

"Hold him tightly," cried Dee to his assistant, "while I administer the last draught. He may injure himself by his struggles."

Kelley obeyed, and twined his arms tightly round the wounded man. And fortunate it was that the precaution was taken; for the elixir was no sooner poured down his throat than his chest began to labour violently, his eyes opened, and, raising himself bolt-upright, he struggled violently to break from the hold imposed upon him. This he would have effected, if Dee had not likewise lent his aid to prevent him.

"This is, indeed, a wonderful sight!" cried Viviana, who had quitted the closet, and now gazed on in awe and astonishment. "I can never be sufficiently thankful to you, reverend sir."

"Give thanks to Him to whom alone they are due," replied Dee. "Summon your friends. They may now resume their posts. My task is accomplished."

Catesby and Garnet being called into the room, could scarcely credit their senses when they beheld Guy Fawkes, who by this time had ceased struggling, reclining on Kelley's shoulder, and, except a certain wildness in the eye, and cadaverousness of hue, looking as he was wont to do.

CHAPTER XV.—THE COLLEGIATE CHURCH AT MANCHESTER.

BIDDING Kelley remain with Guy Fawkes, Doctor Dee signified to Viviana that he had a few words to say to her in private before his departure; and leading the way to an adjoining room, informed her that he was aware of her desire to have her father's remains interred in the collegiate church, and that, so far from opposing her inclinations, he would willingly accede to them, only recommending as a measure of prudence that the ceremonial should be performed at night, and with as much secrecy as possible. Viviana thanked him in a voice of much emotion for his kindness, and entirely acquiesced in his suggestion of caution. At the same time, she could not help expressing her surprise that her thoughts should be known to him. "Though, indeed," she added, "after the wonderful exhibition I have just witnessed of your power, I can scarcely suppose that any limits are to be placed to it."

"Few things are hidden from me," replied Dee, with a gratified smile; "even the lighter matters of the heart, in which I might be supposed to take little interest, do not altogether elude my observation. In reference to this, you will not, I am sure, be offended with me, Viviana, if I tell you I have noticed with some concern the attachment that has arisen between you and Humphrey Chetham."

Viviana uttered an exclamation of surprise, and a deep blush suffused her pallid cheeks.

"I am assuming the privilege of an old man with you, Viviana," continued Dee, in a graver tone, "and, I may add, of an old friend; for your lamented mother was one of my dearest and best friends, as you perchance called to mind when you sent me to-day, by Mr. Catesby, the token I gave her years ago. You have done unwisely in inviting Humphrey Chetham to come hither to-night."

"How so?" she faltered.

"Because, if he keeps his appointment, fatal consequences may ensue," answered Dee. "Your message has reached the ears of one from whom, most of all, you should have concealed it."

"Mr. Catesby has heard of it, I know," replied Viviana. "But you do not apprehend any danger from him?"

"He is Chetham's mortal foe," rejoined Dee, "and will slay him if he finds an opportunity."

"You alarm me," she cried. "I will speak to Mr. Catesby on the subject, and entreat him, as he values my regard, to offer no molestation to his fancied rival."

"*Fancied rival!*" echoed Dee, raising his brows contemptuously. "Do you seek to persuade me that you do not love Humphrey Chetham?"

"Assuredly not," replied Viviana; "I freely acknowledge my attachment to him; it is as strong as my aversion to Mr. Catesby; but the latter is aware that the suit of his rival is as hopeless as his own."

"Explain yourself, I pray you," said Dee.

"My destiny is the cloister, and this he well knows," she rejoined. "As soon as my worldly affairs can be arranged, I shall retire to the English nunnery at Brussels, where I shall vow myself to Heaven."

"Such is your present intention," replied Dee; "but you will never quit your own country."

"What shall hinder me?" asked Viviana, uneasily.

"Many things," returned Dee. "Amongst others, this meeting with your lover."

"Call him not by that name, I beseech you, reverend sir," she rejoined. "Humphrey Chetham will never be other to me than a friend."

"It may be," answered Dee; "but your destiny is *not* the cloister."

"For what am I reserved, then?" demanded Viviana, trembling.

"All I dare tell you," he returned, "all it is needful for you to know, is, that your future career is mixed up with that of Guy Fawkes. But do not concern yourself about what is to come. The present is sufficient to claim your attention."

"True," replied Viviana; "and my first object shall be to despatch a messenger to Humphrey Chetham to prevent him from coming hither."

"Trouble yourself no further on that score," returned Dee; "I will convey the message to him. As regards the funeral, it must take place without delay. I will be at the south porch of the church with the keys *at midnight*; and Robert Burnell, the sexton, and another assistant on whom I can depend, shall be in attendance. Though it is contrary to my religious opinions and feelings to allow a Romish priest to perform the service, I will not interfere with Father Garnet. I owe your mother a deep debt of gratitude, and will pay it to her husband and her

e.

ay, reverend sir," she cried, with a look of great uneasiness: "if
e in possession of this dread secret, the lives of my companions
your power. You will not betray them? Or, if you deem it
luty to reveal the plot to those endangered by it, you will give
trivers timely warning?"

ar nothing," rejoined Dee. "I cannot, were I so disposed, inter-
ith the fixed purposes of fate. The things revealed by my familiar
never pass my lips. They are more sacred than the disclosures
to a priest of your faith at the confessional. The bloody enter-
on which these zealots are bent will fail. I have warned Fawkes;
y warning, though conveyed by the lips of the dead, and by other
equally terrible, was unavailing. I would warn Catesby and
t, but they would heed me not. Viviana Radcliffe," he continued,
solemn voice, "you questioned me just now about the future.
you courage to make the same demand from your dead father?
I will compel his corpse to answer you."

h! no—no," cried Viviana, horror-stricken; "not for worlds would
mit so impious an act. Gladly as I would know what fate has in
for me, nothing should induce me to purchase the knowledge at
adful a price."

arewell, then," rejoined Dee. "At midnight, at the south porch
collegiate church, I shall expect you."

saying, he took his departure; and, on entering the gallery, he

should be peremptory in my demand. Did I not owe you a large debt of gratitude for your resuscitation of Guy Fawkes, I would have insured your secrecy with your life. As it is, I will be content with your oath."

"Fool!" exclaimed Dee; "stand aside, or I will compel you to do so."

"Think not to terrify me by idle threats," returned Catesby. "I willingly acknowledge your superior skill—as, indeed, I have good reason to do—in the science of medicine; but I have no faith in your magical tricks. A little reflection has shown me how the knowledge I at first thought so wonderful was acquired. You obtained it by means of Martin Heydocke, who, mounted on a swift steed, reached the college before me. He told you of the object of my visit—of Viviana's wish to have her father interred in the collegiate church—of her message to Humphrey Chetham. You were, therefore, fully prepared for my arrival, and at first, I must confess, completely imposed upon me. Nay, had I not overheard your conversation just now with Viviana, I might have remained your dupe still. But your allusion to Chetham's visit awakened my suspicions; and on reconsidering the matter, the whole trick flashed upon me."

"What more?" demanded Dee, his brow lowering, and his eyes sparkling with rage.

"Thus much," returned Catesby. "I have your secret, and you have mine. And though the latter is the more important, inasmuch as several lives hang upon it, whereas a conjuror's worthless reputation is alone dependent on the other, yet both must be kept. Swear, then, not to reveal the plot, and, in my turn, I will take any oath you choose to dictate not to disclose the jugglery I have detected."

"I will make no terms with you," returned Dee; "and if I do not reveal your damnable plot, it is not from consideration of you or your associates, but because the hour for its disclosure is not yet arrived. When full proof of your guilt can be obtained, then rest assured it will be made known—though not by me. Not one of your number shall escape—not one."

Catesby again laid his hand upon his sword, and seemed, from his looks, to be meditating the destruction of the doctor and his assistant. But they appeared wholly unconcerned at his glances.

"What you have said concerning Martin Heydocke is false—as false as your own foul and bloody scheme," pursued Dee. "I have neither seen nor spoken with him."

"But your assistant, Edward Kelley, has," retorted Catesby, "and that amounts to the same thing."

"For the third and last time, I command you to stand aside," cried Dee, in a tone of concentrated anger.

Catesby laughed aloud. "What if I refuse?" he said, in a jeering voice.

Doctor Dee made no answer; but, suddenly drawing a small phial from beneath his robe, cast its contents in his opponent's face. Blinded by the spirit, Catesby raised his hand to his eyes; and while in this condition a thick cloth was thrown over his head from behind, and, despite his resistance, he was borne off, and bound with a strong cord to an adjoining tree.

Half an hour elapsed, during which he exhausted his fury in vain

outcries for assistance, and execrations and menaces against Dee and his companion. At the expiration of that time, hearing steps approaching, he called loudly to be released, and was answered by the voice of Martin Heydocke.

"What! is it your worship I behold?" cried Martin, in a tone of affected commiseration. "Mercy on us! what has happened? Have the rascally searchers been here again?"

"Hold your peace, knave, and unbind me," rejoined Catesby, angrily. "I shrewdly suspect," he added, as his commands were obeyed, and the cord twined around his arms unfastened, and the cloth removed—"I shrewdly suspect," he said, fixing a stern glance upon Martin, which effectually banished the smile from his demure countenance, "that you have had some share in this business."

"What I, your worship?" exclaimed Martin. "Not the slightest, I assure you. It was by mere chance I came this way, and, perceiving some one tied to a tree, was about to take to my heels, when, fancying I recognised your worship's well-formed legs, I ventured forward."

"You shall become more intimately acquainted with my worship's boots, rascal, if I find my suspicions correct," rejoined Catesby. "Have you the effrontery to tell me you have never seen this rope and this cloth before?"

"Certes, I have, your worship," replied Martin. "May the first hang me, and the last serve as my winding-sheet, if I speak not the truth! Ah, now I look again," he added, pretending to examine them, "it must be a horse-cloth and halter from the stable. Peradventure I have seen them."

"That I will be sworn you have, and used them, too," rejoined Catesby. "I am half inclined to tie you to the tree in my place. But where is your employer?—where is Doctor Dee?"

"Doctor Dee is *not* my employer," answered Martin, "neither do I serve him. Mr. Humphrey Chetham, as I have already told your worship, is my master. As to the doctor, he left the hall some time since. Father Garnet thought you had accompanied him on the road. I have seen nothing of him. Of a truth I have not."

Catesby reflected a moment, and then strode towards the hall; while Martin, with a secret smile, picked up the halter and cloth, and withdrew to the stable.

Repairing to the chamber of the wounded man, Catesby found Garnet seated by his couch, and related what had occurred. The Jesuit listened with profound attention to the recital, and on its conclusion observed—

"I am sorry you have offended Doctor Dee, my son. He might have proved a good friend. As it is, you have made him a dangerous enemy."

"He was not to be trusted, father," returned Catesby. "But if you have any fears of him or Kelley, I will speedily set them at rest."

"No violence, *my son*," rejoined Garnet; "you will only increase the mischief you have already occasioned. I do not think Dee will betray us. But additional circumspection will be requisite. Tar here while I confer with Viviana on this subject. She has apparer some secret influence with the doctor, and may be prevailed upon to exert it in our behalf."

It was long before Garnet returned. When he reappeared, his looks convinced Catesby that the interview had not proved satisfactory.

"Your imprudence has placed us in a perilous position, my son," he observed. "Viviana refuses to speak to Doctor Dee on the subject, and strongly reprobates your conduct."

Catesby's brow lowered.

"There is but one course to pursue," he muttered, rising; "our lives or his must be sacrificed. I will act at once."

"Hold!" exclaimed Garnet, authoritatively. "Wait till to-morrow; and, if aught occurs in the interim to confirm your suspicions, do as you think proper. I will not oppose you."

"If I forbear so long," returned Catesby, "it will not be safe to remain here."

"I will risk it," said Garnet; "and I counsel you to do the same. You will not leave Viviana at this strait?"

"I have no such thoughts," replied Catesby. "If I go, she goes too."

"Then it will be in vain, I am sure, to endeavour to induce her to accompany you till her father is interred," observed Garnet.

"True," replied Catesby; "I had forgotten that. We shall meet the hoary juggler at the church, and an opportunity may occur for executing my purpose there. Unless he will swear at the altar not to betray us, he shall die by my hand."

"An oath in such a case would be no security, my son," returned Garnet; "and his slaughter and that of his companion would be equally inefficacious, and greatly prejudicial to our cause. If he means to betray us, he has done so already. But I have little apprehension. I do not think him well affected towards the government; and I cannot but think, if you had not thus grossly insulted him, he would have favoured rather than opposed our design. If he was aware of the plot, and adverse to it, what need was there to exert his skill in behalf of our dying friend, who, but for him, would have been ere this a lump of lifeless clay? No, no, my son; you are far too hasty in your judgment. Nor am I less surprised at your injustice. Overlooking the great benefit conferred upon us, because some trifling scheme has been thwarted, you would requite our benefactor by cutting his throat."

"Your rebuke is just, father," returned Catesby. "I have acted heedlessly. But I will endeavour to repair my error."

"Enough, my son," replied Garnet. "It will be advisable to go well armed to the church to-night, for fear of a surprise. But I shall not absent myself on that account."

"Nor I," rejoined Catesby.

The conversation was then carried on on other topics, when they were interrupted by the entrance of Viviana, who came to consult them about the funeral. It was arranged—since better could not be found—that the vehicle used to bring thither the body of the unfortunate knight should transport it to its last home. No persuasions of Garnet could induce Viviana to relinquish the idea of attending the ceremony; and Catesby, though he affected the contrary, secretly rejoiced at her determination.

Night came, and all was in readiness. Viviana to the last indulged hope that Humphrey Chetham would arrive in time to attend the

funeral with her ; but, as he did not appear, she concluded he had received Doctor Dee's warning. Martin Heydocke was left in charge of Guy Fawkes, who still continued to slumber deeply ; and, when within half an hour of the appointed time, the train set out.

They were all well mounted, and proceeded at a slow pace along the lane skirting the west bank of the Irwell. The night was profoundly dark ; and, as it was not deemed prudent to carry torches, some care was requisite to keep in the right road. Catesby rode first, and was followed by Garnet and Viviana ; after whom came the little vehicle containing the body. The rear was brought up by three of the servants sent by Sir Everard Digby ; a fourth acting as driver of the sorry substitute for a hearse. Not a word was uttered by any of the party. In this stealthy manner was the once powerful and wealthy Sir William Radcliffe, the owner of the whole district through which they were passing, conveyed to the burial-place of his ancestors !

In shorter time than they had allowed themselves for the journey, the melancholy cavalcade reached Salford Bridge ; and crossing it at a quick pace, as had been previously arranged by Catesby, arrived without molestation or notice (for no one was abroad in the town at that hour) at the southern gate of the collegiate church, where, it may be remembered, Guy Fawkes had witnessed the execution of the two seminary priests, and on the spikes of which their heads and dismembered bodies were now fixed. An old man here presented himself, and, unlocking the gate, informed them he was Robert Burnell, the sexton. The shell was then taken out, and borne on the shoulders of the servants towards the church, Burnell leading the way. Garnet followed ; and as soon as Catesby had committed the horses to the care of the driver of the carriage, he tendered his arm to Viviana, who could scarcely have reached the sacred structure unsupported.

Doctor Dee met them at the church porch, as he had appointed ; and as soon as they had passed through it the door was locked. Addressing a few words in an under tone to Viviana, but not deigning to notice either of her companions, Dee directed the bearers of the body to follow him, and proceeded toward the choir.

The interior of the reverend and beautiful fane was buried in profound gloom, and the feeble light diffused by the sexton's lantern only made the darkness more palpable. On entering the broad and noble nave, nothing could be seen of its clustered pillars, or of the exquisite pointed arches, enriched with cinquefoil and quatrefoil inclosing blank shields, which they supported. Neither could its sculptured cornice ; its clerestory windows ; its upper range of columns, supporting demi-angels playing on musical instruments ; its moulded roof, crossed by transverse beams, enriched in the interstices with sculptured ornaments, be distinguished. Most of these architectural glories were invisible, but the very gloom in which they were shrouded was imposing. As the dim light fell upon pillar after pillar as they passed, revealing their mouldings, piercing a few feet into the side-aisles, and falling upon the grotesque heads, the embattled ornaments, and grotesque tracery of the arches, the effect was *inexpressibly* striking.

Nor were the personages inappropriate to the sombre scene. The reverend figure of Dee, with his loose flowing robe and long white beard ; the priestly garb and grave aspect of Garnet ; the soldier-like

bearing of Catesby, his armed heel and rapier point clanking upon the pavement; the drooping figure of Viviana, whose features were buried in her kerchief, and whose sobs were distinctly audible; the strangely-fashioned coffin, and the attendants by whom it was borne; all constituted a singular, and, at the same time, deeply interesting picture.

Approaching the magnificent screen terminating the nave, they passed through an arched gateway within it, and entered the choir. The west end of this part of the church was assigned as the burial-place of the ancient and honourable family, the head of which was about to be deposited within it, and was designated from the circumstance the "Radcliffe chancel." A long slab of grey marble, in which a brass plate displaying the armorial bearings of the Radcliffes was inserted, had been removed, and the earth thrown out of the cavity beneath it. Kelley, who had assisted in making the excavation, was standing beside it leaning on a spade, with a lantern at his feet. He drew aside as the funeral train approached, and the shell was deposited at the edge of the grave.

Picturesque and striking as was the scene in the nave, it fell far short of that now exhibited. The choir of the collegiate church at Manchester may challenge comparison with any similar structure. Its thirty elaborately-carved stalls, covered with canopies of the richest tabernacle-work, surmounted by niches, mouldings, pinnacles, and perforated tracery, and crowned with a richly sculptured cornice; its side-aisles, with their pillars and arches; its moulded ceiling, rich in the most delicate and fairy tracery; its gorgeous altar screen of carved oak; and its magnificent eastern window, then filled with stained glass, form a *coup d'œil* of almost unequalled splendour and beauty. Few of these marvels could now be seen; but such points of the pinnacles and hanging canopies of the stalls, of the façades of the side-aisles, and of the fretted roof, as received any portion of the light, came in with admirable effect.

"All is prepared, you perceive," observed Dee to Viviana. "I will retire while the ceremony is performed." And gravely inclining his head, he passed through an arched door in the south aisle, and entered the chapter-house.

Garnet was about to proceed with the service appointed by the Romish Church for the burial of the dead, when Viviana, uttering a loud cry, would have fallen, if Catesby had not flown to her assistance, and borne her to one of the stalls. Recovering her self-possession the next moment, she entreated him to leave her; and while the service proceeded, she knelt down and prayed fervently for the soul of the departed.

Placing himself at the foot of the body, Garnet sprinkled it with holy water, which he had brought with him in a small silver consecrated vessel. He then recited the *De Profundis*, the *Miserere*, and other antiphons and prayers; placed incense in a burner, which he had likewise brought with him, and, having lighted it, bowed reverently towards the altar, sprinkled the body thrice with holy water at the sides, the head, and the feet; and then walking round it with the incense-burner, dispersed its fragrant odour over it. This done, he recited another prayer, pronounced a solemn benediction over the place of sepulture, and the body was lowered into it.

The noise of the earth falling upon the shell aroused Viviana from her devotions. She looked towards the grave, but could see nothing but the gloomy group around it, prominent among which appeared the tall figure of Catesby. The sight was too much for her, and, unable to control her grief, she fainted. Meanwhile, the grave was rapidly filled, all lending their aid to the task; and nothing was wanting but to restore the slab to its original position. By the united efforts of Catesby, Kelley, and the sexton, this was soon accomplished; and the former, unaware of what had happened, was about to proceed to Viviana to tell her all was over, when he was arrested by a loud knocking at the church-door, accompanied by a clamorous demand for admittance.

"We are betrayed!" exclaimed Catesby; "it is as I suspected. Take care of Viviana, father. I will after the hoary impostor, and cleave his skull! Extinguish the lights!—quick!—quick!"

Garnet hastily complied with these injunctions, and the choir was plunged in total darkness. He then rushed to the stalls, but could nowhere find Viviana. He called her by name, but received no answer; and was continuing his fruitless search, when he heard footsteps approaching, and the voice of Catesby exclaimed,

"Follow me with your charge, father."

"Alas! my son, she is not here," replied Garnet. "I have searched each stall as carefully as I could in the dark. I fear she has been spirited away."

"Impossible!" cried Catesby; and he ran his hand along the row of sculptured seats, but without success. "She is indeed gone!" he exclaimed, distractedly. "It was here I left her—nay, here I beheld her at the very moment the lights were extinguished. Viviana! Viviana!"

But all was silent.

"It is that cursed magician's handiwork," he continued, striking his forehead in despair.

"Did you find him?" demanded Garnet.

"No," replied Catesby; "the door of the chapter-house was locked inside. The treacherous villain did well to guard against my fury."

"You provoked his resentment, my son," rejoined Garnet. "But this is not a season for reproaches: something must be done. Where is Kelley?"

At the suggestion, Catesby instantly darted to the spot where the seer had stood. He was not there. He then questioned the servants, whose teeth were chattering with fright, but they had neither heard him depart, nor could tell anything about him; and perceiving plainly from their trepidation that these men would lend no aid, even if they did not join the assailants, he returned to communicate his apprehensions to Garnet. During all this time the knocking and vociferations at the door had continued with increased violence, and reverberated in hollow peels along the roof and aisles of the church.

The emergency was a fearful one. Catesby, however, had been too often placed in situations of peril, and was too constitutionally brave, to experience much uneasiness for himself; but his apprehensions lest Garnet should be captured, and the sudden and mysterious disappearance of Viviana, almost distracted him. Persuading himself she might have fallen to the ground, or that he had overlooked the precise spot where he had left her, he renewed his search, but with no better success.

than before; and he was almost beginning to believe that some magic might have been practised to cause her disappearance, when it occurred to him that she had been carried off by Kelley.

"Fool that I was not to think of that before!" he exclaimed. "I have unintentionally aided their project by extinguishing the lights. But, now that I am satisfied she is gone, I can devote my whole energies to the preservation of Garnet. They shall not capture us so easily as they anticipate."

With this he approached the priest, and, grasping his hand, drew him noiselessly along. They had scarcely passed through the arched doorway in the screen, and set foot within the nave, when the clamour without ceased. The next moment a thundering crash was heard; the door burst open, and a number of armed figures bearing torches, with drawn swords in their hands, rushed with loud vociferations into the church.

"We must surrender, my son," cried Garnet. "It will be useless to contend against that force."

"But we may yet escape them," rejoined Catesby. And glancing hastily round, he perceived a small open door in the wall at the right, and pointing it out to the priest, hurried towards it.

On reaching it, they found it communicated with a flight of stone steps, evidently leading to the roof.

"Saved! saved!" cried Catesby, triumphantly. "Mount first, father. I will defend the passage."

The pursuers, who saw the course taken by the fugitives, set up a loud shout, and ran as swiftly as they could in the same direction; and by the time the latter had gained the door, they were within a few yards of it. Garnet darted up the steps; but Catesby lingered to make fast the door, and thus oppose some obstacle to the hostile party. His efforts, however, were unexpectedly checked, and, on examination, he found it was hooked to the wall at the back. Undoing the fastening, the door swung to, and he instantly bolted it. Overjoyed at his success, and leaving his pursuers, who at this moment arrived, to vent their disappointment in loud menaces, he hastened after Garnet. Calling loudly to him, he was answered from a small dark chamber on the right, into which the priest had retreated.

"We have but prolonged our torture," groaned Garnet; "I can find no outlet. Our foes will speedily force an entrance, and we must then fall into their hands."

"There must be some door opening upon the roof, father," rejoined Catesby. "Mount as high as you can, and search carefully. I will defend the stairs, and will undertake to maintain my post against the whole rout."

Thus urged, Garnet ascended the steps. After the lapse of a few minutes, during which the thundering at the door below increased, and the heavy blows of some weighty implement directed against it were distinctly heard, he cried, "I have found a door, but the bolts are rusty—I cannot move them."

"Use all your strength, father," shouted Catesby, who, having *planted himself with his drawn sword at an advantageous point, was listening with intense anxiety to the exertions of the assailing party.* "Do not relax your efforts for a moment."

"It is in vain, my son," rejoined Garnet, in accents of despair. "My hands are bruised and bleeding, but the bolts stir not."

"Distraction!" cried Catesby, gnashing his teeth with rage. "Let me try."

And he was about to hasten to the priest's assistance when the door below was burst open with a loud crash, and the assailants rushed up the steps. The passage was so narrow that they were compelled to mount singly; and Catesby's was scarcely a vain boast when he said he could maintain his ground against the whole host. Shouting to Garnet to renew his efforts, he prepared for the assault. Reserving his petronels to the last, he trusted solely to his rapier; and leaning against the newel, or circular column round which the stairs twined, he was in a great measure defended from the weapons of his adversaries, while they were completely exposed to his attack. The darkness, moreover, in which he was enveloped offered an additional protection, whereas the torches they carried made his mark certain. As soon as the foremost of the band came within reach, Catesby plunged his sword into his breast, and pushed him back with all his force upon his comrades. The man fell heavily backwards, dislodging the next in advance, who in his turn upset his successor, and so on, till the whole band was thrown into confusion. A discharge of fire-arms followed; but, sheltered by the newel, Catesby sustained no injury. At this moment he was cheered by a cry from Garnet that he had succeeded in forcing back the bolts, terror having supplied him with a strength not his own; and making another sally upon his assailants, amid the disorder that ensued Catesby retreated, and rapidly tracking the steps, reached the door through which the priest had already passed. When within a short distance of the outlet, Catesby felt, from the current of fresh air that saluted him, that it opened upon the roof of the church. Nor was he deceived. A few steps placed him upon the leads, where he found Garnet.

"It is you, my son!" cried the latter, on beholding him; "I thought from the shouts you had fallen into the hands of the enemy."

"No, Heaven be praised! I am as yet safe, and trust to deliver you out of their hands. Come with me to the battlements."

"The battlements!" exclaimed Garnet. "A leap from such a height as that were certain destruction."

"It were so," replied Catesby, dragging him along. "But trust to me, and you shall yet reach the ground uninjured."

Arrived at the battlements, Catesby leaned over them, and endeavoured to ascertain what was beneath. It was still so dark that he could scarcely discern any objects but those close to him; but as far as he could trust his vision, he thought he perceived a projecting building some twelve or fourteen feet below; and calling to mind the form of the church, which he had frequently seen and admired, he remembered its chantries, and had no doubt but it was the roof of one of them that he beheld. If he could reach it, the descent from thence would be easy; and he immediately communicated the idea to Garnet, who shrank aghast from it. Little time, however, was allowed for consideration. Their pursuers had already scaled the stairs, and were springing one after another upon the leads, uttering the most terrible threats against the destroyer of their comrade. Hastily divesting himself

his cloak, Catesby clambered over the battlements; and, impelled by fear, Garnet threw off his robe, and followed his example. Clinging to the grotesque stone water-spouts which projected below the battlements, and placing the points of his feet upon the arches of the clerestory windows, and thence upon the mullions and transom bars, Catesby descended in safety, and then turned to assist his companion, who was quickly by his side.

The most difficult and dangerous part of the descent had yet to be accomplished. They were now nearly thirty feet from the ground, and the same irregularities in the walls which had favoured them in the upper structure did not exist in the lower. But their present position, exposed as it was to their pursuers, who, having reached the point immediately overhead, were preparing to fire upon them, was too dangerous to allow of its occupation for a moment, and Garnet required no urging to make him clamber over the low embattled parapet. Descending a flying buttress that defended an angle of the building, Catesby, who was possessed of great strength and activity, was almost instantly upon the ground. Garnet was not so fortunate. Missing his footing, he fell from a considerable height, and his groans proclaimed that he had received some serious injury. Catesby instantly flew to him, and demanded, in a tone of the greatest anxiety, whether he was much hurt.

"My right arm is broken," gasped the sufferer, raising himself with difficulty. "What other injuries I have sustained I know not; but every joint seems dislocated, and my face is covered with blood. Heaven have pity on me!"

As he spoke, a shout of exultation arose from the hostile party, who, having heard Garnet's fall, and the groans that succeeded it, at once divined the cause, and made sure of a capture. A deep silence followed, proving that they had quitted the roof, and were hastening to secure their prey. Aware that it would take them some little time to descend the winding staircase, and traverse the long aisle of the church, Catesby felt certain of distancing them. But he could not abandon Garnet, who had become insensible from the agony of his fractured limb, and, lifting him carefully in his arms, he placed him upon his shoulder, and started at a swift pace towards the further extremity of the churchyard.

At the period of this history, the western boundary of the collegiate church was formed by a precipitous sandstone rock of great height, the base of which was washed by the waters of the Irwell, while its summit was guarded by a low stone wall. In after years, a range of small habitations was built upon this spot; but they have been recently removed, and the rock having been lowered, a road now occupies their site. Nerved by desperation, Catesby, who was sufficiently well acquainted with the locality to know whither he was shaping his course, determined to hazard a descent, which under calmer circumstances he would have deemed wholly impracticable. His pursuers, who issued from the church-porch a few seconds after he had passed it, saw him *hurry towards the low wall edging the precipice, and, encumbered as he was with the priest, vault over it.* Not deeming it possible he would *dare to spring from such a height,* they darted after him. But they *were deceived, and could scarcely credit their senses when they found*

him gone. By the light of their torches they perceived him shooting down the almost perpendicular side of the rock, and the next moment a hollow plunge told that he had reached the water. They stared at each other in mute astonishment.

"Will you follow him, Dick Haughton?" observed one, as soon as he had recovered his speech.

"Not I," replied the fellow addressed. "I have no fancy for a broken neck. Follow him thyself, if thou hast a mind to try the soundness of thy pate: I warrant that rock will put it to the proof."

"Yet the feat has just been done, and by one burdened with a wounded comrade into the bargain," remarked the first speaker.

"He must be the devil, that's certain," rejoined Haughton; "and Doctor Dee himself is no match for him."

"He has the devil's luck, that's certain," cried a third soldier. "But, hark! he is swimming across the river. We may yet catch him on the opposite bank. Come along, comrades."

With this, they rushed out of the churchyard; made the best of their way to the bridge; and, crossing it, flew to the bank of the river, where they dispersed in every direction, in search of the fugitive. But they could not discover a trace of him or his wounded companion.

CHAPTER XVI.—THE ENCOUNTER.

CATESBY himself could scarcely tell how he accomplished his hair-breadth escape. Reckless almost of the result, he slid down the rock, catching at occasional irregularities as he descended. The river was of great depth at this point, and broke the force of his fall. On rising, he struck out a few yards, and suffered himself to be carried down the stream. He had never for one moment relinquished his hold of Garnet, and being an admirable swimmer, found little difficulty in sustaining him with one arm, while with the other he guided his course in the water. In this way he reached the shore in safety, about a hundred yards below the bridge, by which means he avoided his pursuers, who, as has just been stated, searched for him above it.

After debating with himself for a short time as to what course he should pursue, he decided upon conveying Garnet to the hall, where he could procure restoratives and assistance; and though he was fully sensible of the danger of this plan, not doubting the mansion would be visited and searched by his pursuers before morning, yet the necessity of warning Guy Fawkes outweighed every other consideration. Accordingly, again shouldering the priest, who, though he had regained his sensibility, was utterly unable to move, he commenced his toilsome march; and being frequently obliged to pause and rest himself, more than an hour elapsed before he reached his destination.

It was just growing light as he crossed the drawbridge; and seeing a horse tied to a tree, and the gate open, he began to fear the enemy had preceded him. Full of misgiving, he laid Garnet upon a heap of straw in an outbuilding, and entered the house. He found no one below, though he glanced into each room. He then noiselessly ascended the stairs, with the intention of proceeding to Guy Fawkes's chamber. *As he traversed the gallery, he heard voices in one of the chambers,*

the door of which was ajar, and pausing to listen, distinguished the tones of Viviana. Filled with astonishment, he was about to enter the room to inquire by what means she had reached the hall, when he was arrested by the voice of her companion. It was that of Humphrey Chetham. Maddened by jealousy, Catesby's first impulse was to rush into the room and stab his rival in the presence of his mistress. But he restrained his passion by a powerful effort.

After listening for a few minutes intently to their conversation, he found that Chetham was taking leave, and, creeping softly down stairs, stationed himself in the hall, through which he knew his rival must necessarily pass. Chetham presently appeared. His manner was dejected, his looks downcast; and he would have passed Catesby without observing him, if the latter had not laid his hand upon his shoulder.

"Mr. Catesby!" exclaimed the young merchant, starting as he beheld the stern glance fixed upon him. "I thought——"

"You thought I was a prisoner, no doubt," interrupted Catesby, bitterly. "But you are mistaken. I am here to confound you and your juggling and treacherous associate."

"I do not understand you," replied Chetham.

"I will soon make myself intelligible," retorted Catesby. "Follow me to the garden."

"I perceive your purpose, Mr. Catesby," replied Chetham, calmly; "but it is no part of my principles to expose my life to ruffianly violence. If you choose to lay aside this insolent demeanour, which is more befitting an Alsatian bully than a gentleman, I will readily give you such explanation of my conduct as will fully content you, and satisfy you that any suspicions you may entertain of me are unfounded."

"Coward!" exclaimed Catesby, striking him. "I want no explanation. Defend yourself, or I will treat you with still greater indignity."

"Lead on, then," cried Chetham: "I would have avoided the quarrel if I could. But this outrage shall not pass unpunished!"

As they quitted the hall Viviana entered it; and, though she was greatly surprised by the appearance of Catesby, his furious gestures left her in no doubt as to his purpose. She called to him to stop; but no attention was paid by either party to her cries.

On gaining a retired spot beneath the trees, Catesby, without giving his antagonist time to divest himself of the heavy horseman's cloak with which he was encumbered, and scarcely to draw his sword, assaulted him. The combat was furious on both sides, but it was evident that the young merchant was no match for his adversary. He maintained his ground, however, for some time with great resolution; but being hotly pressed, in retreating to avoid a thrust his foot caught in the long grass, and he fell. Catesby would have passed his sword through his body, if it had not been turned aside by another weapon. It was that of Guy Fawkes, who, followed by Martin Heydocke, had staggered towards the scene of strife, reaching it just in time to save the life of Humphrey Chetham.

"Heaven be praised! I am not too late!" he exclaimed. "Put up your blade, Catesby, or turn it against me."

CHAPTER XVII.—THE EXPLANATION.

UTTERING an exclamation of rage, Catesby turned fiercely upon Fawkes, and for a moment appeared disposed to accept his invitation to continue the combat with him. But as he regarded the other's haggard features, and perceived in them the traces of his recent struggle with death—as he saw he was scarcely able to wield the blade he opposed against him—his wrath changed to compassion, and he sheathed his sword. By this time Humphrey Chetham had sprung to his feet, and, picking up his fallen weapon, stood on his defence; but finding that Catesby meditated no further hostilities, he returned it to the scabbard.

"I owe my life to you," he said to Guy Fawkes, in a tone of deep gratitude.

"You owe it to Viviana Radcliffe, not to me," returned Fawkes, feebly, and leaning upon his sword for support. "Had it not been for her cries, I should have known nothing of this quarrel. And I would now gladly learn what has occasioned it."

"So would I," added Chetham, "for I am as ignorant as yourself how I have offended Mr. Catesby."

"I will tell you, then," returned Catesby, sternly. "You were a party to the snare set for us by Doctor Dee, from which I narrowly escaped with life, and Father Garnet at the expense of a broken limb."

"Is Garnet hurt?" demanded Fawkes, anxiously.

"Grievously," replied Catesby; "but he is out of the reach of his enemies; of whom," he added, pointing to Chetham, "one of the most malignant and treacherous now stands before you."

"I am quite in the dark as to what has happened," observed Fawkes, "having only a few minutes ago been roused from my slumbers by the shrieks of Viviana, who entreated me to come and separate you. But I cannot believe Humphrey Chetham so treacherous as you represent him."

"So far from having any enmity towards Father Garnet," observed Chetham, "my anxious desire was to preserve him; and with that view I was repairing to Doctor Dee, when I encountered Mr. Catesby in the hall, and, before I could offer any explanation, I was forced by his violence and insults into this combat."

"Is this the truth, Catesby?" asked Fawkes.

"Something near it," rejoined the latter; "but perhaps Mr. Chetham will likewise inform you by whose agency Viviana was transported hither from the collegiate church?"

"That inquiry ought rather to be made of the lady herself, sir," returned Chetham, coldly. "But, as I am assured she would have no objection to my answering it, I shall not hesitate to do so. She was conveyed hither by Kelley and an assistant, who departed as soon as their task was completed."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Catesby between his ground teeth. "But how chanced it, sir, that you arrived here so opportunely?"

"I might well *refuse to answer a question thus insolently put*," rejoined Chetham. "*But to prevent further misunderstanding, I will tell*

you, that I came by Viviana's invitation at midnight; and, ascertaining from my servant, Martin Heydocke, whom I found watching by the couch of Guy Fawkes, the melancholy business on which she was engaged, I determined to await her return, which occurred about an hour afterwards, in the manner I have just related."

"I was in the court-yard when Mistress Viviana was brought back," interposed Martin Heydocke, who was standing at a respectful distance from the group; "and, after Kelley had delivered her to my charge, I heard him observe in an under tone to his companion, 'Let us ride back as fast as we can, and see what they have done with the prisoners.'"

"They made sure of their prey before it was captured," observed Catesby, bitterly. "But we have disappointed them. Dee and his associate may yet have reason to repent their perfidy."

"You will do well not to put yourself again in their power," observed Humphrey Chetham. "If you will be counselled by me, you and Guy Fawkes will seek safety in instant flight."

"And leave you with Viviana?" rejoined Catesby, sarcastically.

"She is in no present danger," replied Chetham. "But, if it is thought fitting or desirable, I will remain with her."

"I do not doubt it," returned Catesby, with a sneer; "but it is neither fitting nor desirable. And, hark ye, young sir, if you have indulged in any expectations with regard to Viviana Radcliffe, it is time you were undeceived. She will never wed one of your degree, nor of your faith."

"I have her own assurance she will never wed at all," replied Chetham, in an offended tone. "But had she not crushed my hopes by declaring she was vowed to a convent, no menaces of yours, who have neither right nor title thus to interfere, should induce me to desist from my suit."

"Either resign all pretensions to her hand, or prepare to renew the combat," cried Catesby, fiercely.

"No more of this," interposed Guy Fawkes. "Let us return to the house, and adjust our differences there."

"I have no further business here," observed Humphrey Chetham. "Having taken leave of Viviana," he added, with much emotion, "I do not desire to meet her again."

"It is well, sir," rejoined Catesby; "yet, stay—you mean us no treachery?"

"If you suspect me, I will remain," replied Humphrey Chetham.

"On no account," interposed Guy Fawkes. "I will answer for him with my life."

"Perhaps, when I tell you I have procured the liberation of Father Oldcorne," returned Chetham, "and have placed him in security in Ordsall Cave, you will admit that you have done me wrong."

"I have been greatly mistaken in you, sir, I must own," observed Catesby, advancing towards him, and extending his hand. But Humphrey Chetham folded his arms upon his breast, and bowing coldly, *withdrew. He was followed by Martin Heydocke; and presently afterwards the tramp of his horse's feet was heard crossing the draw-bridge.*

CHAPTER XVIII.—THE DISCOVERY.

TENDERING his arm to Fawkes, who was almost too feeble to walk unsupported, Catesby led him slowly to the hall. On reaching it, they met Viviana, in a state bordering upon distraction; but her distress was speedily relieved by their assurances that the young merchant had departed unhurt,—a statement immediately afterwards confirmed by the entrance of Martin Heydocke, charged with a message from his master to her. Without communicating his design to the others, and, indeed, almost shunning Viviana, Catesby proceeded to the outbuilding where he had deposited Garnet. He found him in great pain, and praying fervently to be released from his sufferings.

"Do not despair, father," said Catesby, in as cheerful a tone as he could assume; "the worst is over. Viviana is in safety. Father Oldcorne has escaped, and is within a short distance of us; and Guy Fawkes is fully able to undertake a journey of any distance. You are our sole concern. But I am assured, if you will allow me to exercise the slight surgical skill I possess in your behalf, that you will be able to accompany us."

"Do with me what you please, my son," groaned Garnet. "But if my case is as desperate as I believe it, I entreat you not to bestow any further care upon me, and, above all, not to expose yourself to risk on my account. Our enemies are sure to pursue us,—and what matter if I am captured? They will wreak their vengeance on a worthless carcass,—for such I shall soon be. But it would double the anguish I now endure, if you and Fawkes were to fall into their hands. Go, then, and leave me here to perish. My dying moments will be cheered by the conviction that the great enterprise—for which alone I desire to live—will not be unaccomplished."

"There is no need to leave you, father," replied Catesby; "nor shall any consideration induce me to do so, till I have rendered you every aid that circumstances will permit."

"My son," replied Garnet, faintly, "the most efficacious balm you can apply will be the certainty that you are in safety. You say Viviana is here. Fly with Fawkes, and leave me to her care."

"She must go with us," observed Catesby, uneasily.

"Not so, my son," returned Garnet; "her presence will only endanger you. She must *not* go. And you must abandon all hopes of an union with her."

"I would as soon abandon the great design itself," returned Catesby, moodily.

"If you persist in this, you will ruin it," rejoined Garnet. "Think of her no more. Bend your thoughts exclusively on the one grand object, and be—what you are chosen to be—the defender and deliverer of our holy church."

"I would gladly act as you advise me, father," replied Catesby; "but I am spell-bound by this maiden."

"This is idle from you, my son," replied Garnet, reproachfully. "*Separate yourself from her, and you will soon regain your former mastery over yourself.*"

"Well, well, father," rejoined Catesby, "the effort, at least, shall b

made. But her large possessions, which would be so useful to our cause, and which, if I wedded her, would be wholly devoted to it,—think of what we lose, father.”

“I have thought of it, my son,” replied Garnet, “but the consideration does not alter my opinion; and if I possess any authority over you, I strictly enjoin you not to proceed farther in the matter. Viviana never can be yours.”

“She *shall* be, nevertheless,” muttered Catesby, “and before many hours have elapsed,—if not by her own free will, by force. I have ever shown myself obedient to your commands, father,” he added aloud, “and I shall not transgress them now.”

“Heaven keep you in this disposition, my dear son!” exclaimed Garnet, with a look of distrust; “and let me recommend you to remove yourself as soon as possible out of the way of temptation.”

Catesby muttered an affirmative, and, taking Garnet in his arms, conveyed him carefully to his own chamber; and placing him on a couch, examined his wounds, which were not so serious as either he or the sufferer imagined; and with no despicable skill—for the experiences of a soldier’s life had given him some practice—bandaged his broken arm, and fomented his bruises.

This done, Garnet felt so much easier, that he entreated Catesby to send Viviana to him, and to make preparations for his own immediate departure. Feigning acquiescence, Catesby quitted the room, but with no intention of complying with the request. Not a moment, he felt, must be lost, if he would execute his dark design; and, after revolving many wild expedients, an idea occurred to him. It was to lure Viviana to the cave where Father Oldcorne was concealed; and he knew enough of the pliant disposition of the latter, to be certain he would assent to his scheme. No sooner did this plan occur to him, than he hurried to the cell, and found the priest, as Chetham had stated. As he had foreseen, it required little persuasion to induce Oldcorne to lend his assistance to the forced marriage, and he only feared the decided opposition they should encounter from Viviana.

“Fear nothing, then, father,” said Catesby; “in this solitary spot no one will hear her cries. Whatever resistance she may make, perform the ceremony, and leave the consequences to me.”

“The plan is desperate, my son,” returned Oldcorne; “but so are our fortunes. And as Viviana will not hear reason, we have no alternative. You swear that, if you are once wedded to her, all her possessions shall be devoted to the furtherance of the great cause?”

“All, father—I swear it,” rejoined Catesby, fervently.

“Enough,” replied Oldcorne. “The sooner it is done, the better.”

It was then agreed between them that the plan least likely to excite suspicion would be for Oldcorne to proceed to the hall, and under some plea prevail upon Viviana to return with him to the cave. Acting upon this arrangement, they left the cell together, shaping their course under the trees to avoid observation; and while Oldcorne repaired to the hall, Catesby proceeded to the stable, and saddling the *only steed left*, rode back to the cave, and concealing the animal *behind the brushwood*, entered the excavation. Some time elapsed before *the others arrived*; and as in his present feverish state of mind *moments appeared ages*, the suspense was almost intolerable. At length

he heard footsteps approaching, and, with a beating heart, distinguished the voice of Viviana. The place was buried in profound darkness; but Oldcorne struck a light, and set fire to a candle in a lantern. The feeble glimmer diffused by it was not sufficient to penetrate the recesses of the cavern; and Catesby, who stood at the further extremity, was completely sheltered from observation.

"And now, father," observed Viviana, seating herself with her back towards Catesby, upon the stone bench once used by the unfortunate prophetess, "I would learn the communication you desire to make to me. It must be something of importance since you would not disclose it at the hall."

"It is, daughter," replied Oldcorne, who could scarcely conceal his embarrassment. "I have brought you hither, where I am sure we shall be uninterrupted, to confer with you on a subject nearest my heart. Your lamented father being taken from us, I, as his spiritual adviser, aware of his secret wishes and intentions, conceive myself entitled to assume his place."

"I consider you in the light of a father, dear sir," replied Viviana, "and will follow your advice as implicitly as I would that of him I have lost."

"Since I find you so tractable, child," returned Oldcorne, reassured by her manner, "I will no longer hesitate to declare the motive I had in bringing you hither. You will recollect that I have of late strongly opposed your intention of retiring to a convent."

"I know it, father," interrupted Viviana, "but——"

"Hear me out," continued Oldcorne. "Recent events have strengthened my disapproval of the step. You are now called upon to active duties, and must take your share in the business of life—must struggle and suffer like others—and not shrink from the burden imposed upon you by Heaven."

"I do not shrink from it, father," replied Viviana; "and if I were equal to the active life you propose, I would not hesitate to embrace it; but I feel I should sink under it."

"Not if you had one near you who could afford you that support which feeble woman ever requires," returned Oldcorne.

"What mean you, father?" inquired Viviana, fixing her dark eyes full upon him.

"That you must marry, daughter," returned Oldcorne; "unite yourself to some worthy man, who will be to you what I have described."

"And was it to tell me this that you brought me here?" asked Viviana, in a slightly offended tone.

"It was, daughter," replied Oldcorne; "but I have not yet done. It is not only needful you should marry, but your choice must be such as I, who represent your father, and have your welfare thoroughly at heart, can approve."

"You can find me a husband, I doubt not," remarked Viviana, coldly.

"I have already found one," returned Oldcorne: "a gentleman suitable to you in rank, religion, years—for your husband should be older than yourself, Viviana."

"I will not affect to misunderstand you, father," she replied; "you mean Mr. Catesby."

"You have guessed right, dear daughter," rejoined Oldcorne.

"I thought I had made myself sufficiently intelligible on this point before, father," she returned.

"True," replied Oldcorne; "but you are no longer, as I have just laboured to convince you, in the same position you were in when the subject was formerly discussed."

"To prevent further misunderstanding, father," rejoined Viviana, "I now tell you that, in whatever position I may be placed, I will never, under any circumstances, wed Mr. Catesby."

"What are your objections to him, daughter?" asked Oldcorne.

"They are numberless," replied Viviana. "But it is useless to particularise them. I must pray you to change the conversation, or you will compel me to quit you."

"Nay, daughter, if you thus obstinately shut your ears to reason, I must use very different language towards you. Armed with parental authority, I shall exact obedience to my commands."

"I cannot obey you, father," replied Viviana, bursting into tears; "indeed, indeed I cannot. My heart, I have already told you, is another's."

"He who has robbed you of it is a heretic," rejoined Oldcorne, sternly, "and therefore your union with him is out of the question. Promise me you will wed Mr. Catesby, or, in the name of your dead father, I will invoke a curse upon your head. Promise me, I say."

"Never!" replied Viviana, rising. "My father would never have enforced my compliance, and I dread no curse thus impiously pronounced. You are overstepping the bounds of your priestly office, sir. Farewell."

As she moved to depart, a strong grasp was laid on her arm, and turning, she beheld Catesby.

"You here, sir!" she cried, in great alarm.

"Ay," replied Catesby. "At last you are in my power, Viviana."

"I would fain misunderstand you, sir," she rejoined, trembling; "but your looks terrify me. You mean no violence?"

"I mean that Father Oldcorne shall wed us—and that, too, without a moment's delay," replied Catesby, sternly.

"Monster!" shrieked Viviana; "you will not—dare not commit this foul offence. And if you dare, Father Oldcorne will not assist you. Ah! what means that sign? I cannot be mistaken in you, father? You cannot be acting in concert with this wicked man? Save me from him!—save me!"

But the priest kept aloof, and taking a missal from his vest, hastily turned over the leaves. Viviana saw that her appeal to him was vain.

"Let me go!" she shrieked, struggling with Catesby. "You cannot force me to wed you whether I will or not; and I will die rather than consent. Let me go, I say! Help!—help!" And she made the cavern ring with her screams.

"Heed her not, father," shouted Catesby, who still held her fast, "but proceed with the ceremony."

Oldcorne, however, appeared irresolute, and Viviana, perceiving it, redoubled her cries.

"This will be no marriage, father," she said, "even if you proceed with it. I will protest against it to all the world, and you will be

deprived of your priestly office for your share in so infamous a transaction."

"You will think otherwise anon, daughter," replied Oldcorne, advancing towards them with the missal in his hand.

"If it be no marriage," observed Catesby, significantly, "the time will come when you may desire to have the ceremony repeated."

"Mr. Catesby," cried Viviana, altering her manner, as if she had taken a sudden resolution, "one word before you proceed with your atrocious purpose, which must end in misery to us all. There are reasons why you can never wed me."

"Ah!" exclaimed Catesby, starting.

"Is it so, my son?" asked Oldcorne, uneasily.

"Pshaw!" exclaimed Catesby. "She knows not what she says. Proceed, father."

"I have proofs that will confound you," cried Viviana, breaking from him. And darting towards the light, she took from her bosom the packet given her by Guy Fawkes, and tore it open. A letter was within it, and a miniature.

Opening the letter, she cast her eye rapidly over its contents; and then looking up, exclaimed in accents of delirious joy, "Saved! saved! Father Oldcorne, this man is married already!"

Catesby, who had watched her proceedings in silent astonishment, and was now advancing towards her, recoiled as if a thunderbolt had fallen at his feet.

"Can this be true?" cried the priest, in astonishment.

"Let your own eyes convince you," rejoined Viviana, handing him the letter.

"I am satisfied," returned Oldcorne, after he had glanced at it. "We have both been spared the commission of a great crime. Mr. Catesby, it appears from this letter that you have a wife living in Spain."

"It is useless to deny it," replied Catesby. "But as you were ignorant of the matter, the offence (if any) would have lain wholly at my door; nor should I have repented of it, if it had enabled me to achieve the object I have in view."

"Thank Heaven it has gone no further!" exclaimed Oldcorne.

"Daughter, I humbly entreat your forgiveness."

"How came that packet in your possession?" demanded Catesby fiercely of Viviana.

"It was given me by Guy Fawkes," she replied.

"Guy Fawkes!" exclaimed Catesby. "Has he betrayed his friend?"

"He has proved himself your best friend, by preventing you from committing a crime which would have entailed wretchedness on yourself and me," returned Viviana.

"I have done with him, and with all of you," cried Catesby, with a fierce glance at Oldcorne. "Henceforth, pursue your projects alone. You shall have no further assistance from me. I will serve the Spaniard. Englishmen are not to be trusted."

So saying, he rushed out of the cavern, and seeking his horse, mounted him, and rode off at full speed.

"How shall I obtain your forgiveness for my conduct in th

culpable affair, dear daughter?" said Oldcorne, with an imploring look at Viviana.

"By joining me in thanksgivings to the Virgin for my deliverance," replied Viviana, prostrating herself before the stone cross.

Oldcorne knelt beside her, and they continued for some time in earnest prayer. They then arose, and, quitting the cave, proceeded to the hall.

CHAPTER XIX.—THE DEPARTURE FROM THE HALL.

GUY FAWKES was as much surprised to hear of the sudden departure of Catesby as he was concerned at the cause; but he still thought it probable he would return. In this expectation, however, he was disappointed. The day wore on, and no one came. The uncertainty in which Fawkes was kept, added to his unwillingness to leave Garnet, still detained him, in spite of the risk he ran, at the hall; and it was only when urged by Viviana, that he began seriously to reflect whither he should bend his steps. Towards evening Garnet was so much better that he was able to sit up, and he passed some hours in conference with Oldcorne.

"If I do not suffer a relapse," he observed to the latter, "I will set out with Guy Fawkes to-morrow, and we will proceed by easy stages to London."

"I cannot but approve your resolution," returned Oldcorne; "for though so long a journey may be inconvenient, and retard your recovery, yet every hour you remain here is fraught with additional peril. I will accompany you; we shall both be safer in the capital: and perhaps Viviana, now she will be no longer exposed to the persecutions of Catesby, will form one of the party."

"I should not wonder," replied Garnet. "I shall be deeply concerned if Catesby has really abandoned the enterprise. But I cannot think it. I did all I could to dissuade him from prosecuting this union, knowing how hopeless it was, and little thinking he would be rash enough to seek to accomplish it by force, or that he would find an assistant in you."

"Say no more about it, father, I entreat you," rejoined Oldcorne. "The scheme failed, as it deserved to do; and I sincerely repent the share I was induced by Catesby's artful representations to take in it. If we have lost our leader, we have still Guy Fawkes, who is a host in himself, and as true as the steel that hangs by his side."

"We cannot spare Catesby," replied Garnet. "With many faults, he has one redeeming quality, courage. I am not sorry he has been thwarted in his present scheme, as, if he returns to us—as I doubt not he will—it will fix his mind steadily on the one object which should be ever before it. Give me your arm, father; I am glad to find I can walk, though feebly. That is well," he added, as they emerged upon the gallery; "I shall be able to reach Viviana's chamber without further assistance. Do you descend, and see that Martin Heydocke is on the watch."

In obedience to the injunctions of his superior, Oldcorne went in search of Martin Heydocke, who had been stationed in the court-yard to give timely notice of any hostile approach; but not finding him

there, he proceeded towards the drawbridge. Garnet, meanwhile, had reached the door of Viviana's chamber, which was slightly ajar; and he was about to pass through it, when he perceived that she was on her knees before Guy Fawkes, whom she was addressing in the most passionate terms. The latter was seated at a table, with his head upon his hand, in a thoughtful posture. Surprised at the sight, and curious to hear what Viviana could be saying, Garnet drew back to listen.

"When you quit this house," were the first words that caught the listener's ear, "we shall never meet again; and oh! let me have the consolation of thinking that, in return for the devoted attachment you have shown me, and the dangers from which you have preserved me, I have preserved you from one equally imminent. Catesby, from whatever motive, has abandoned the conspiracy. Do you act likewise, and the whole dreadful scheme will fall to the ground."

"Catesby cannot abandon it," replied Fawkes. "He is bound by ties that no human power can sunder. And, however he may estrange himself from us now, when the time for action arrives, rest assured he will not be absent."

"It may be so," replied Viviana; "but I deny that the oath either he or you have taken is binding. The deed you have sworn to do is evil; and no vow, however solemnly pronounced, can compel you to commit crime. Avoid this sin—avoid further connexion with those who would work your undoing, and do not stain your soul with guilt from which it will never be cleansed."

"You seek in vain to move me," replied Guy Fawkes, firmly. "My purpose is unalterable. The tempest that clears away the pestilence destroys many innocent lives, but it is not the less wholesome on that account. Our unhappy land is choked with the pestilence of heresy, and must be freed from it, cost what it will, and suffer who may. The wrongs of the English Catholics imperatively demand redress; and, since it is denied us, we must take it. Oppression can go no further, nor endurance hold out longer. If this blow be not struck, we shall have no longer a religion. And how comes it, Viviana, that you, a zealous Catholic, whose father perished by these very oppressors, and who are yourself in danger from them, can seek to turn me from my purpose?"

"Because I know it is wrongful," she replied. "I have no desire to avenge the death of my slaughtered father, still less to see our religion furthered, by the dreadful means you propose. In His own due season, the Lord will redress our wrongs."

"The Lord has appointed me one of the ministers of His vengeance," cried Fawkes, in a tone of enthusiasm.

"Do not deceive yourself," returned Viviana; "it is not by Heaven, but by the powers of darkness, that you are incited to this deed. Do not persevere in this fatal course," she continued, clasping her hands together, and gazing imploringly in his face; "do not—do not!"

Guy Fawkes continued in the same attitude as before, with his gaze turned upwards, and apparently lost in thought.

"Have I no power to move you?" cried Viviana, her eyes streaming with tears.

"None whatever," replied Guy Fawkes, firmly.

"Then you are lost," she rejoined.

"If it is Heaven's will, I am," answered Fawkes; "but at least I believe I am acting rightly."

"And rest assured you are so, my son," cried Garnet, throwing open the door, and stepping into the room. "I have overheard your conversation, and I applaud your resolution."

"You need have no fears of me, father," replied Fawkes. "I do not lightly undertake a project; but once embarked in it, nothing can turn me aside."

"In this case your determination is wisely formed, my son," returned Garnet; "and if Viviana will ever give me an opportunity of fully discussing the matter, I am sure I can satisfy her you are in the right."

"I will discuss it with you whenever you think proper," she replied. "But no arguments will ever convince me that your project is approved by Heaven."

"Let it pass now, daughter," rejoined Garnet; "enough has been said on the subject. I came hither to tell Guy Fawkes, that if our enemies permit us to pass the night without molestation (as Heaven grant they may!), I think I shall be strong enough to set out with him to-morrow, when I propose we should journey together to London."

"Agreed," replied Fawkes.

"Father Oldcorne will accompany us," pursued Garnet.

"And I, too, will go with you, if you will permit me," said Viviana. "I cannot remain here; and I have no further fears of Mr. Catesby. Doctor Dee told me my future fate was strangely mixed up with that of Guy Fawkes. I know not how it may be, but I will not abandon him while there is a hope to cling to."

"Viviana Radcliffe," rejoined Guy Fawkes, coldly, "deeply as I feel the interest you take in me, I think it right to tell you that no efforts you can use will shake me from my purpose. If I live, I will execute my design."

"While I live, I will urge you to it," remarked Garnet.

"And while I live, I will dissuade you from it," added Viviana. "We shall see who will obtain the victory."

"We shall," replied Garnet, smiling confidently.

"Hear me further," continued Viviana. "I do not doubt that your zeal is disinterested; yet still your mode of life, and the difficulties in which you are placed, may not unnaturally influence your conduct. That this may no longer be the case, I here place part of my fortune at your disposal. I require little or nothing myself; but I would, if possible, save one to whom I owe so much, and whom I value so much, from destruction."

"I fully appreciate your generosity—to give it its lightest term—Viviana," returned Guy Fawkes, in a voice of deep emotion. "Under any circumstances I should reject it: under the present, I do so the more positively, because the offer, kind as it is, seems to imply that my poverty leads me to act contrary to my principles. Gold has no power over me: I regard it as dross; and when I could easily have won it, I neglected the opportunity. As no reward would ever induce me to commit an action my conscience disapproved, so none will deter me from a purpose which I regard as my duty."

"Enough," replied Viviana, sadly. "I will no longer question your

motives, or oppose your plan, but will pray Heaven to open your eyes to the truth."

"Your conduct is in all respects worthy of you, daughter," observed Garnet, kindly.

"You have rejected one offer," continued Viviana, looking at Fawkes, "but I trust you will not decline that I am about to propose to you."

"What is it?" asked Fawkes, in some surprise.

"It is, that I may be permitted to regard you as a father," replied Viviana, with some hesitation. "Having lost my own father, I feel I need some protector; and I would gladly make choice of you, if you will accept the office."

"I willingly accede to your request, and am much flattered by it, Viviana," replied Fawkes. "I am a homeless man, and a friendless; and the affection of such a being as yourself will fill up the only void in my heart. But I am wedded to the great cause. I can never be more to you than a father."

"Nay, I asked nothing more," she replied, blushing deeply.

"Having thus arranged the terms upon which we shall travel," observed Garnet, with a smile, "nothing is needed but to prepare for our journey. We start early to-morrow morning."

"I shall be ready at daybreak," replied Viviana.

"And I am ready now," added Guy Fawkes. "In my opinion, we run great risk in remaining here another night. But be it as you will."

At this moment they were interrupted by the entrance of Father Oldcorne, who, with a countenance of great alarm, informed them he could nowhere find Martin Heydocke.

"Do you suspect any treachery on his part?" asked Garnet of Viviana.

"I have always found him trustworthy," she answered; "and his father was *my* father's oldest servant. I cannot think he would betray us. At the same time, I must admit his disappearance at this juncture looks suspicious."

"If my strength were equal to it," returned Guy Fawkes, "I would keep watch throughout the night; but that might prevent me from accompanying you to-morrow. My advice, I repeat, is—to set out at once."

This opinion, however, was overruled by Garnet and Viviana, who did not think the danger so urgent, and attributed the absence of Martin Heydocke to some unimportant cause. Guy Fawkes made no further remonstrance, and it was agreed they should start, as originally proposed, at daybreak. The party then separated, and Viviana wandered alone over the old house, taking a farewell, which she felt would be her last, of every familiar object. Few things were as she had known them, but even in their present forlorn state they were dear to her; and the rooms she trod, though dismantled, were the same she had occupied in childhood.

There is no pang more acute to a sensitive nature than that occasioned by quitting an abode or spot endeared by early recollections and associations, to which we feel a strong presentiment we shall never return. Viviana experienced this feeling in its full force, and she lingered in each room as if she had not the power to leave it. Her

emotions at length became so overpowering, that, to relieve them, she strolled forth into the garden. Here, new objects awakened her attention, and recalled happier times with painful distinctness. Twilight was fast deepening, and, viewed through this dim and softened medium, everything looked as of old, and produced a tightening and stifling sensation in her breast, that nothing but a flood of tears could remove.

The flowers yielded forth their richest scents, and the whole scene was such as she had often beheld it in times long ago, when sorrow was wholly unknown to her. Perfumes, it is well known, exercise a singular influence over the memory. A particular odour will frequently call up an event, and a long train of circumstances connected with the time when it was first inhaled. Without being aware whence it arose, Viviana felt a tide of recollections pressing upon her, which she would have willingly repressed, but which it was out of her power to control. Her tears flowed abundantly; and at length, with a heart somewhat lightened of its load, she arose from the bench on which she had thrown herself, and proceeded along a walk to gather a few flowers as memorials of the place.

In this way she reached the further end of the garden, and was stooping to pluck a spray of some fragrant shrub, when she perceived the figure of a man behind a tree at a little distance from her. From his garb, which was that of a soldier, she instantly knew he was an enemy; and, though greatly alarmed, she had the courage not to scream; but breaking off the branch, she uttered a careless exclamation, and slowly retraced her steps. She half expected to hear that the soldier was following her, and prepared to start off at full speed to the house; but, deceived by her manner, he did not stir. On reaching the end of the walk, she could not resist the inclination to look back, and, glancing over her shoulder, perceived the man watching her. But as she moved, he instantly withdrew his head.

Her first step on reaching the house was to close and fasten the door; her next, to hasten to Guy Fawkes's chamber, where she found him, together with Garnet and Oldcorne. All three were astounded at the intelligence; agreeing that an attack was intended, and that a large force was, in all probability, concealed in the garden, awaiting only the arrival of night to surprise and seize them. The disappearance of the younger Heydocke was no longer a mystery. He had been secured and carried off by the hostile party, to prevent him from giving the alarm. The emergency was a fearful one, and it excited consternation amongst all except Guy Fawkes, who preserved his calmness.

"I foresaw we should be attacked to-night," he said, "and I am therefore not wholly unprepared. Our only chance is to steal out unobserved; for resistance would be in vain, as their force is probably numerous; and I am as helpless as an infant, while Father Garnet's broken arm precludes any assistance from him. The subterranean passage leading from the oratory to the further side of the moat having been stopped up by the pursuivant and his band, it will be necessary to cross the drawbridge; and as soon as it grows sufficiently dark we must make the attempt. We have no horses, and must trust to our own exertions for safety. Catesby would now be invaluable. It is not his custom to desert his friends at the season of their greatest need."

"Great as is my danger," observed Viviana, "I would rather, so far

as I am concerned, that he were absent, than owe my preservation to him. I have no fears for myself."

"And my only fears are for you," rejoined Fawkes.

Half an hour of intense anxiety was now passed by the party. Garnet was restless and uneasy. Oldcorne betrayed his agitation by un-availing lamentations, by listening to every sound, and by constantly rushing to the windows to reconnoitre, until he was checked by Fawkes, who represented to him the folly of his conduct. Viviana, though ill at ease, did not allow her terror to appear, but endeavoured to imitate the immovable demeanour of Guy Fawkes, who always became more collected in proportion to the danger by which he was threatened.

At the expiration of the time above mentioned, it had become quite dark, and desiring his companions to follow him, Guy Fawkes drew his sword, and grasping Viviana's hand, led the way down stairs. Before opening the door, he listened intently, and hearing no sound, issued cautiously forth. The party had scarcely gained the centre of the court, when a caliver was discharged at them, which, though it did no damage, served as a signal to the rest of their foes. Guy Fawkes, who had never relinquished his hold of Viviana, now pressed forward as rapidly as his strength would permit, and the two priests followed. But loud shouts were raised on the drawbridge, and it was evident it was occupied by the enemy.

Uncertain what to do, Guy Fawkes halted, and was about to return to the house, when a shout from behind told him their retreat was intercepted. In this dilemma there was nothing for it but to attempt to force a passage across the drawbridge, or to surrender at discretion; and though Guy Fawkes would not at other seasons have hesitated to embrace the former alternative, he knew that his strength was not equal to it now.

While he was internally resolving not to yield himself with life, and supporting Viviana, who clung closely to him, the clatter of hoofs was heard rapidly approaching along the avenue, and presently afterwards two horsemen galloped at full speed towards the drawbridge. The noise had likewise attracted the attention of the enemy; who, apprehensive of a rescue, prepared to stop them. But the tremendous pace of the riders rendered this impossible. A few blows were exchanged, a few shots fired, and they had crossed the drawbridge.

"Who goes there?" vociferated Guy Fawkes, as the horsemen approached him.

"It is the voice of Guy Fawkes," cried the foremost, whose tones proclaimed it was Catesby. "They are here," he cried, reining in his steed.

"Where is Viviana?" vociferated his companion, who was no other than Humphrey Chetham.

"Here—here," replied Guy Fawkes.

With the quickness of thought the young merchant was by her side, and in another moment she was placed on the saddle before him, and borne at a headlong pace across the drawbridge.

"Follow me," cried Catesby. "I will clear a passage for you. Once across the drawbridge, you are safe. A hundred yards down the avenue on the right, you will find a couple of horses tied to a tree. Quick! quick!"

As he spoke, a shot whizzed past his head, and a tumultuous din in the rear told him that their pursuers were close upon them. Striking spurs into his steed, Catesby dashed forward, and, dealing blows right and left, cleared the drawbridge of its occupants, many of whom leaped into the moat to escape his fury. His companions were close at his heels, and got over the bridge in safety.

"Fly!—fly!" cried Catesby,—"to the horses—the horses! I will check all pursuit."

So saying, and while the others flew towards the avenue, he faced his opponents, and, making a desperate charge upon them, drove them backwards. In this conflict, though several shots were fired, and blows aimed at him on all sides, he sustained no injury, but succeeded in defending the bridge sufficiently long to enable his friends to mount.

He then rode off at full speed, and found the party waiting for him at the end of the avenue. Father Oldcorne was seated on the same steed as his superior. After riding with them upwards of a mile, Humphrey Chetham dismounted, and resigning his horse to Viviana, bade her farewell and disappeared.

"And now to London!" cried Catesby, striking into the road on the right, and urging his steed to a rapid pace.

"Ay, to London!—to the parliament-house!" echoed Fawkes, following him with the others.

Book II.—The Discovery.

CHAPTER I.—THE LANDING OF THE POWDER.

TOWARDS the close of the sixth day after their departure from Ordsall Hall, the party approached the capital. The sun was setting as they descended Highgate Hill, and the view of the ancient, and then most picturesque city, was so enchanting, that Viviana, who beheld it for the first time, entreated her companions to pause for a few minutes to allow her to contemplate it. From the spot where they halted, the country was completely open to Clerkenwell, and only a few scattered habitations lay between them and the old grey ramparts of the city, with their gates and fortifications, which were easily discernible even at that distance. Above them rose the massive body and central tower of Saint Paul's Cathedral—a structure far surpassing that which has succeeded it—while amid the innumerable gables, pointed roofs, and twisted chimneys of the houses, sprang a multitude of lesser towers and spires, lending additional beauty to the scene. Viviana was enraptured; and while gazing on the prospect almost forgot her sorrows. Guy Fawkes and Catesby, who were a little in advance of the others, turned their gaze westward, and the former observed to his companion, "The sun is setting over the parliament-house. The sky seems stained with blood. It looks portentous of what is to follow."

"I would gladly behold the explosion from this hill or from yon heights," replied Catesby, pointing towards Hampstead. "It will be a sight such as man has seldom seen."

"I shall never live to witness it!" exclaimed Fawkes, in a melancholy tone.

"What! still desponding?" returned Catesby, reproachfully. "I thought, since you had fully recovered from your wound, you had shaken off your ears."

"You misunderstand me," replied Fawkes; "I mean that I shall perish with our foes."

"Why so?" cried Catesby. "There will be plenty of time to escape after you have fired the train."

"I shall not attempt it," rejoined Fawkes, in a sombre voice. "I will abide the result in the vault. If I perish, it will be a glorious death."

"Better live to see the regeneration of our faith, and our restoration to our rights," rejoined Catesby. "But we will speak of this hereafter. Here comes Garnet."

"Where do you propose we should lodge to-night?" asked the latter, riding up.

"At the house at Lambeth, where the powder is deposited," returned Catesby.

"Will it be safe?" asked Garnet, uneasily.

"We shall be safer there than elsewhere, father," replied Catesby. "If it is dark enough to-night, Fawkes and I will remove a portion of the powder. But we are losing time. We must pass through the city before the gates are closed."

In this suggestion Garnet acquiesced, and calling to Viviana to follow them—for since his late atrocious attempt Catesby had not exchanged a word or look with her, but during the whole of the journey kept sedulously aloof,—the whole party set forward, and proceeding at a brisk pace soon reached the walls of the city. Passing through Cripplegate, they shaped their course towards London Bridge. Viviana was filled with astonishment at all she saw; the multitude and magnificence of the shops, compared with such as she had previously seen; the crowds in the streets—for even at that hour they were thronged; the varied dresses of the passengers—the sober garb of the merchant contrasting with the showy cloak, the preposterous ruff, swelling hose, plumed cap, and swaggering gait of the gallant or the ruffler; the brawls that were constantly occurring; the number of signs projecting from the dwellings; all she witnessed or heard surprised and amused her, and she would willingly have proceeded at a slower pace to indulge her curiosity, had not her companions urged her onward.

As they were crossing Eastcheap, in the direction of Crooked-lane, a man suddenly quitted the footpath, and, rushing towards Garnet, seized his bridle, and cried, "I arrest you. You are a Romish priest."

"It is false, knave," returned Garnet. "I am as good a Protestant as thyself, and am just arrived with my companions from a long journey."

"Your companions are all rank Papists," rejoined the stranger. "You yourself are Father Garnet, Superior of the Jesuits; and, if I am not deceived, the person next you is Father Oldcorne, also of that order. If I am wrong, you can easily refute the charge. Come with me to the council. If you refuse, I will call assistance from the passengers."

Garnet saw he was lost if he did not make an immediate effort at self-preservation, and, resolving to be beforehand with his assailant

he shouted at the top of his voice, "Help! help! my masters. This villain would rob me of my purse."

"He is a Romish priest," vociferated the stranger. "I call upon you to assist me to arrest him."

While the passengers, scarcely knowing what to make of these contradictory statements, flocked round them, Guy Fawkes, who was a little in advance with Catesby, rode back, and, seeing how matters stood, instantly drew a petronel, and with the butt-end felled the stranger to the ground. Thus liberated, Garnet struck spurs into his steed, and the whole party dashed off at a rapid pace. Shouts were raised by the bystanders, a few of whom started in pursuit; but the speed at which the fugitives rode soon bore them out of danger.

By this time they had reached London Bridge, and Viviana, in some degree recovered from the fright caused by the recent occurrence, ventured to look around her. She could scarcely believe she was crossing a bridge, so completely did the tall houses give it the appearance of a street; and if it had not been for occasional glimpses of the river caught between the openings of these lofty habitations, she would have thought her companions had mistaken the road. As they approached the ancient gateway (afterwards denominated Traitor's Tower), at the Southwark side of the bridge, she remarked with a shudder the dismal array of heads garnishing its spikes, and, pointing them out to Fawkes, cried, "Heaven grant yours may never be amongst the number!"

Fawkes made no answer, but dashed beneath the low and gloomy arch of the gate.

Striking into a street on the right, the party skirted the walls of Saint Saviour's Church, and presently drew near the Globe Theatre, above which floated its banner. Adjoining it was the old Bear-garden—the savage inmates of which made themselves sufficiently audible. Garnet hastily pointed out the first-mentioned place of amusement to Viviana as they passed it, and her reading having made her well acquainted with the noble dramas produced at that unpretending establishment—little better than a barn in comparison with a modern play-house—she regarded it with deep interest. Another theatre—the Swan—speedily claimed her attention; and leaving it behind, they came upon the open country.

It was now growing rapidly dark, and Catesby, turning off into a narrow lane on the right, shouted to his companions to keep near him. The tract of land they were traversing was flat and marshy. The air was damp and unwholesome—for the swamp had not been drained as in later times—and the misty exhalations arising from it added to the obscurity. Catesby, however, did not relax his pace, and his companions imitated his example. Another turn on the right seemed to bring them still nearer the river, and involved them in a thicker fog.

All at once Catesby stopped, and cried, "We should be near the house. And yet this fog perplexes me. Stay here while I search for it."

"If you leave us, we shall not readily meet again," rejoined Fawkes.

But the caution was unheeded, Catesby having already disappeared. A few moments afterwards, Fawkes heard the sound of a horse's hoofs approaching him; and, thinking it was Catesby, he hailed the rider.

The horseman made no answer, but continued to advance towards them.

Just then the voice of Catesby was heard at a little distance, shouting, "I was right. It is here."

The party then hastened in the direction of the cry, and perceived through the gloom a low building, before the door of which Catesby, who had dismounted, was standing.

"A stranger is amongst us," observed Fawkes, in an under tone, as he rode up.

"Where is he?" demanded Catesby, hastily.

"Here," replied a voice. "But fear nothing. I am a friend."

"I must have stronger assurance than that," replied Catesby. "Who are you?"

"Robert Keyes," replied the other. "Do you not know my voice?"

"In good truth I did not," rejoined Catesby, "and you have spoken just in time. Your arrival is most opportune. But what brings you here to-night?"

"The same errand as yourself, I conclude, Catesby," replied Keyes. "I came here to see that all was in safety. But who have you with you?"

"Let us enter the house, and you shall learn," replied Catesby.

With this he tapped thrice at the door in a peculiar manner, and presently a light was seen through the windows, and a voice from within demanded who knocked.

"Your master," replied Catesby.

Upon this the door was instantly unbarred. After a hasty greeting between Catesby and his servant, whom he addressed as Thomas Bates, the former inquired whether aught had occurred during his absence, and was answered that, except an occasional visit from Mr. Percy, one of the conspirators, no one had been near the house, everything being in precisely the same state he had left it.

"That is well," replied Catesby. "Now, then, to dispose of the horses."

All the party having dismounted, their steeds were led to a stable at the back of the premises by Catesby and Bates, while the others entered the house. It was a small, mean-looking habitation, standing at a short distance from the river-side on the skirts of Lambeth Marsh, and its secluded situation and miserable appearance seldom induced any one to visit it. On one side was a deep muddy sluice communicating with the river. Within, it possessed but slight accommodation, and only numbered four apartments. One of the best of these was assigned to Viviana, and she retired to it as soon as it could be prepared for her reception. Garnet, who still carried his arm in a sling, but who was in other respects almost recovered from his accident, tendered every assistance in his power, and would have remained with her, but she entreated to be left alone. On descending to the lower room, he found Catesby, who, having left Bates in care of the horses, produced such refreshments as they had brought with them. These were scanty enough; but a few flasks of excellent wine which they found within

the house made some amends for the meagre repast. Viviana was solicited by Guy Fawkes to join them; but she declined, alleging that she was greatly fatigued, and about to retire to rest.

Their meal ended, Catesby proposed that they should ascertain the condition of the powder, as he feared it might have suffered from being so long in the vault. Before making this examination, the door was carefully barred; the shutters of the windows closed; and Guy Fawkes placed himself as sentinel at the door. A flag beneath the grate, in which a fire was never kindled, was then raised, and disclosed a flight of steps leading to a vault beneath. Catesby, having placed a light in a lantern, descended with Keyes; but both Garnet and Oldcorne refused to accompany them.

The vault was arched and lofty, and strange to say, for its situation, dry,—a circumstance owing, in all probability, to the great thickness of the walls. On either side were ranged twenty barrels filled with powder; and at the further end stood a pile of arms, consisting of pikes, rapiers, demi-lances, petronels, calivers, corslets, and morions. Removing one of the barrels from its station, Catesby forced open the lid, and examined its contents, which he found perfectly dry and uninjured.

"It is fit for use," he observed, with a significant smile, as he exhibited a handful of the powder to Keyes, who stood at a little distance with the lantern; if it will keep as well in the cellar beneath the parliament-house, our foes will soon be nearer heaven than they would ever be if left to themselves."

"When do you propose to transport it across the river?" asked Keyes.

"To-night," replied Catesby. "It is dark and foggy, and fitting for the purpose. Bates!" he shouted; and at the call his servant instantly descended. "Is the wherry at her moorings?"

"She is, your worship," replied Bates.

"You must cross the river instantly, then," rejoined Catesby, "and proceed to the dwelling, adjoining the parliament-house, which we hired from Ferris. Here is the key. Examine the premises, and bring word whether all is secure."

Bates was about to depart, when Keyes volunteering to accompany him, they left the house together. Having fastened down the lid of the cask, Catesby summoned Fawkes to his assistance, and by his help as many barrels as could be safely stowed in the boat were brought out of the vault. More than two hours elapsed before Bates returned. He was alone, and informed them that all was secure, but that Keyes had decided on remaining where he was, it being so dark and foggy that it was scarcely possible to cross the river.

"I had some difficulty in landing," he added, "and got considerably out of my course. I never was out on so dark a night before."

"It is the better for us," rejoined Catesby. "We shall be sure to escape observation."

In this opinion Guy Fawkes concurred, and they proceeded to transport the powder to the boat, which was brought up the sluice within a few yards of the door. This done, and the barrels covered with a piece of tarpaulin, they embarked, and Fawkes, seizing an oar, propelled the *skiff along the narrow creek.*

As Bates had stated, the fog was so dense that it was wholly impossible to steer correctly, and Fawkes was therefore obliged to trust to chance as to the course he took. However, having fully regained his

strength, he rowed with great swiftness, and, as far as he could judge, had gained the mid-stream, when, before he could avoid it, he came in violent contact with another boat, oversetting it, and plunging its occupants in the stream.

Disregarding the hints and even menaces of Catesby, who urged him to proceed, Fawkes immediately lay upon his oars, and, as the water was perfectly smooth, succeeded, without much difficulty, in extricating the two men from their perilous situation. Their boat, having drifted down the stream, could not be recovered. The chief of these personages was profuse in his thanks to his deliverers, whom he supposed were watermen, and they took care not to deceive him.

"You may rely upon my gratitude," he said; "and when I tell you I am the Earl of Salisbury, you will be satisfied I have the means of evincing it."

"The Earl of Salisbury!" exclaimed Catesby, who was seated by Fawkes, having taken one of the oars. "Is it possible?"

"I have been on secret state business," replied the earl, "and did not choose to employ my own barge. I was returning to Whitehall when your boat struck against mine."

"It is our bitterest enemy," observed Catesby, in an under tone, to Fawkes. "Fate has delivered him into our hands."

"What are you about to do?" demanded Fawkes, observing that his companion no longer pulled at the oar.

"Shoot him," replied Catesby. "Keep still, while I disengage my petronel."

"It shall not be," returned Fawkes, laying a firm grasp upon his arm. "Let him perish with the others."

"If we suffer him to escape now, we may never have such a chance again," rejoined Catesby. "I will shoot him."

"I say you shall not," rejoined Fawkes. "His hour is not yet come."

"What are you talking about, my masters?" demanded the earl, who was shivering in his wet garments.

"Nothing," replied Catesby, hastily. "I will throw him overboard," he whispered to Fawkes.

"Again I say you shall not," replied the latter.

"I see what you are afraid of," cried the earl. "You are smugglers. You have got some casks of distilled waters on board, and are afraid I may report you. Fear nothing. Land me near the palace, and count upon my gratitude."

"Our course lies in a different direction," replied Catesby, sternly. "If your lordship lands at all, it must be where we choose."

"But I have to see the king to-night. I have some important papers to deliver to him respecting the Papists," replied Salisbury.

"Indeed!" exclaimed Catesby. "We must, at least, have those papers," he observed in a whisper to Fawkes.

"That is a different affair," replied Fawkes. "They may prove serviceable to us."

"My lord," observed Catesby, "by a strange chance you have fallen into the hands of Catholics. You will be pleased to deliver these papers to us."

"Ah! villains, would you rob me?" cried the earl. "You shall take my life sooner."

"We will take both, if you resist," replied Catesby, in a menacing tone.

"Nay, then," returned Salisbury, attempting to draw his sword, "we will see who will obtain the mastery. We are equally matched. Come on; I fear you not."

But the waterman who had rowed the earl was not of equal courage with his employer, and refused to take part in the conflict.

"It will be useless to contend with us," cried Catesby, relinquishing the oar to Fawkes, and springing forward. "I must have those papers," he added, seizing the earl by the throat, "or I will throw you overboard."

"I am mistaken in you," returned Salisbury; "you are no common mariner."

"It matters not who or what I am," rejoined Catesby, fiercely. "Your papers, or you die."

Finding it in vain to contend with his opponent, the earl was fain to yield, and reluctantly produced a packet from his doublet, and delivered it to him.

"You will repent this outrage, villain," he said.

"Your lordship will do well to recollect you are still in my power," rejoined Catesby. "One thrust of my sword will wipe off some of the injuries you have inflicted on our suffering party."

"I have heard your voice before," cried Salisbury; "you shall not escape me."

"Your imprudence has destroyed you," retorted Catesby, clutching the earl's throat more tightly, and shortening his sword, with the intent to plunge it into his breast.

"Hold!" exclaimed Fawkes, grasping his arm, and preventing the blow. "I have already said you shall not slay him. You are in possession of his papers. What more would you have?"

"His life," replied Catesby, struggling to liberate his arm.

"Let him swear not to betray us," rejoined Fawkes. "If he refuses, I will not stay your hand."

"You hear what my companion says, my lord," cried Catesby. "Will you swear to keep silence as to what has just occurred?"

After a moment's hesitation, Salisbury assented, and Catesby relinquished his grasp.

During this time the boat had drifted considerably down the stream, and, in spite of the darkness, Catesby noticed with some uneasiness that they were approaching more than one vessel. The Earl of Salisbury also perceived this, and raised a cry for help, but was instantly checked by Catesby, who took a seat beside him, and, placing the point of his rapier at his breast, swore he would stab him if he made any further clamour.

The threat, and the dangerous propinquity of his enemy, effectually silenced the earl, and Catesby directed Fawkes to make for the shore as quickly as he could. His injunctions were obeyed, and Fawkes plied the oars with so much good-will, that in a few minutes the wherry struck against the steps which projected far into the water a little to the right of the Star Chamber, precisely on the spot where Westminster Bridge now stands.

Here the earl and his companion were allowed to disembark, and

they had no sooner set foot on land than Guy Fawkes pushed off the boat, and rowed as swiftly as he could towards the centre of the stream. He then demanded of Catesby whether he should make for the parliament-house, or return.

"I scarcely know what to advise," replied Catesby. "I do not think the earl will attempt pursuit. And yet I know not. The papers we have obtained may be important. Cease rowing for a moment, and let us listen."

Guy Fawkes complied, and they listened intently, but could only hear the rippling of the current against the sides of the skiff.

"We have nothing to fear," observed Catesby. "He will not pursue us, or he cannot find a boat."

As he spoke, the glimmer of torches was visible on the shore, and the plunge of oars into the water convinced him his opinion was erroneous.

"What course shall we take?" inquired Fawkes.

"I care not," replied Catesby, sullenly. "If I had had my own way, this would not have happened."

"Have no fears," replied Fawkes, rowing swiftly down the stream.

"We shall easily escape."

"We will not be taken alive," returned Catesby, seating himself on one of the barrels, and hammering against the lid with the butt-end of his petronel. "I would sooner blow us all to perdition than he shall capture us."

"You are right," replied Fawkes. "By my patron, Saint James, he is taking the same course as ourselves."

"Well, let him board us," replied Catesby. "I am ready for him."

"Do as you think proper if the worst occurs," returned Fawkes.

"But if we make no noise, I am assured we shall not be perceived."

With this he ceased rowing, and suffered the boat to drop down the stream. As ill-luck would have it, it seemed as if the hostile bark had struck completely into their track, and, aided by the current, and four sturdy rowers, was swiftly approaching.

"The earl will be upon us in a few minutes," replied Catesby. "If you have any prayers to offer, recite them quickly, for I swear I will be as good as my word."

"I am ever prepared for death," replied Fawkes. "Ha! we are saved!"

This last exclamation was occasioned by his remarking a large barge towards which they were rapidly drifting.

"What are you about to do?" cried Catesby. "Leap on board, and abandon the skiff, together with its contents?"

"No," replied Fawkes; "sit still, and leave the rest to me."

By this time they had approached the barge, which was lying at anchor, and Guy Fawkes, grasping a boat-hook, fixed it in the vessel as they passed, and drew their own boat close to its side—so close, in fact, that it could not be distinguished from it.

The next moment the chase came up; and they distinctly perceived the Earl of Salisbury seated in the stern of the boat, holding a torch. As he approached the barge, he held the light towards it; but the skiff, *being on the off side, entirely escaped notice.* When the chase *had got to a sufficient distance to be out of hearing, the fugitives rowed wildly in the contrary direction.*

Not judging it prudent to land, they continued to ply the oars, until fatigue compelled them to desist, and they had placed some miles between them and their pursuers.

"Long before this the earl must have given up the chase," observed Catesby. "We must return before daybreak, and either land our powder near the parliament-house, or take it back to the vault at Lambeth."

"We shall run equal risk either way," replied Fawkes, "and, having ventured thus far, we may as well go through with it. I am for landing at Westminster."

"And I," rejoined Catesby. "I do not like giving up a project when I have once undertaken it."

"You speak my sentiments exactly," returned Fawkes. "Westminster be it."

After remaining stationary for about an hour, they rowed back again, and, aided by the stream, in a short time reached their destination. The fog had in a great degree cleared off, and day began to break as they approached the stairs leading to the parliament-house. Though this was not what they desired, inasmuch as the light added to the risk they would have run in landing the powder, it enabled them to ascertain that no one was on the watch.

Running swiftly in towards a sort of wharf, protected by a roofed building, Catesby leaped ashore, and tied the skiff to a ring in the steps. He then desired Fawkes to hand out the powder as quickly as he could. The order was promptly obeyed, and in a few minutes several barrels were on the strand.

"Had you not better fetch Keyes to help us, while I get out the rest?" observed Fawkes.

Catesby assented, and, hurrying to the house, found Keyes, who was in great alarm about them. He instantly accompanied the other to the wharf, and by their united efforts the powder was expeditiously and safely removed.

CHAPTER II.—THE TRAITOR.

THE habitation to which the powder was conveyed adjoined, as has already been stated, the parliament-house, and stood at the south-west corner of that structure. It was a small building, two stories high, with a little garden attached to it, surrounded by lofty walls, and belonged to Whinnard, the keeper of the royal wardrobe, by whom it was let to a person named Ferris. From the latter it was hired by Thomas Percy, one of the conspirators, and a relative of the Earl of Northumberland—of whom it will be necessary to speak more fully hereafter—for the purpose to which it was now put.

Having bestowed the barrels of powder carefully in the cellar, and fastened the door of the house and the garden-gate after them, the trio returned to the boat, and rowed back to Lambeth, where they arrived without being noticed. They then threw themselves upon the floor, and sought some repose after their fatigue.

It was late in the day before they awoke. Garnet and Oldcorne had been long astir; but Viviana had not quitted her chamber. Catesby's first object was to examine the packet he had obtained from the Earl

of Salisbury, and, withdrawing to a corner, he read over the papers one by one carefully.

Guy Fawkes watched his countenance as he perused them, but he asked no questions. Many of the documents appeared to have little interest, for Catesby tossed them aside with an exclamation of disappointment. At length, however, a small note dropped from the bundle. Catesby picked it up, opened it, and his whole expression changed. His brow grew contracted; and, springing to his feet, he uttered an ejaculation of rage, crying, "It is as I suspected. We have traitors among us."

"Whom do you suspect?" cried Fawkes.

"Tresham!" cried Catesby, in a voice of thunder—"the fawning, wily, lying Tresham. Fool that I was to league him with us!"

"He is your own kinsman," observed Garnet.

"He is," replied Catesby; "but were he my own brother, he should die. Here is a letter from him to Lord Mounteagle, which has found its way to the Earl of Salisbury, hinting that a plot is hatching against the state, and offering to give him full information of it."

"Traitor! false, perjured traitor!" cried Fawkes. "He must die."

"He shall fall by my hand," rejoined Catesby. "Stay! a plan occurs to me. He cannot be aware that this letter is in my possession. I will send Bates to bid him come hither. We will then charge him with his criminality, and put him to death."

"He deserves severe punishment, no doubt," replied Garnet; "but I am unwilling you should proceed to the last extremities with him."

"There is no alternative, father," replied Catesby. "Our safety demands his destruction."

Garnet returned no answer, but bowed his head sorrowfully upon his breast. Bates was then despatched to Tresham; and preparations were made by the three lay conspirators for executing their fell design.

It was agreed, that on his arrival Tresham should be seized and disarmed, and, after being interrogated by Catesby touching the extent of his treachery, should be stabbed by Guy Fawkes. This being resolved upon, it became a question how they should act in the interim. It was possible that after the loss of his papers some communication might take place between the Earl of Salisbury and Lord Mounteagle, and through the latter with Tresham. Thus prepared, on the arrival of Bates, Tresham, seeing through their design, instead of accompanying him, might give information of their retreat to the officers.

The contingency was by no means improbable, and it was urged so strongly by Garnet, that Catesby began to regret his precipitancy in sending the message. Still his choler was so greatly roused against Tresham, that he resolved to gratify his vengeance at any risk.

"If he betrays us, and brings the officers here, we shall know how to act," he remarked to Fawkes. "There is that below which will avenge us on them all."

"True," replied Fawkes. "But I trust we shall not be obliged to resort to it."

Soon after this, Bates returned with a message from Tresham stating that he would be at the rendezvous at nightfall, and that

had important disclosures to make to them. He desired them, moreover, to observe the utmost caution, and not to stir abroad.

"He may, perhaps, be able to offer an explanation of his conduct," observed Keyes.

"Impossible!" returned Catesby; "but he shall not die without a hearing."

"That is all I desire," returned Keyes.

While the others were debating upon the interrogations they should put to Tresham, and further examining the Earl of Salisbury's papers, Garnet repaired to Viviana's chamber, and informed her what was about to take place. She was filled with consternation, and entreated to be allowed to see Guy Fawkes for a few moments alone. Moved by her supplications, Garnet complied, and presently afterwards Fawkes entered the room.

"You have sent for me, Viviana," he said. "What would you?"

"I have just heard you are about to put one of your companions to death," she replied; "it must not be."

"Viviana Radcliffe," returned Fawkes, "by your own desire you have mixed yourself up with my fortunes. I will not now discuss the prudence of the step you have taken. But I deem it necessary to tell you, once for all, that any attempts to turn me from the line of conduct I have marked out to myself will fail. Tresham has betrayed us, and he must pay the penalty of his treason."

"But not with his life," replied Viviana. "Do you not now perceive into what enormities this fatal enterprise will lead you? It is not one crime alone that you are about to commit, but many. You constitute yourselves judges of your companion, and, without allowing him to defend himself, take his life. Disguise it as you may, it is assassination—cold-blooded assassination."

"His life is justly forfeited," replied Guy Fawkes, sternly. "When he took the oath of secrecy and fidelity to our league, he well knew what the consequences would be if he violated it. He has done so. He has compromised our safety. Nay, he has sold us to our enemies, and nothing shall save him."

"If this is so," replied Viviana, "how much better would it be to employ the time now left in providing for your safety, than in contriving means of vengeance upon one who will be sufficiently punished for his baseness by his own conscience. Even if you destroy him, you will not add to your own security, while you will commit a foul and needless crime, equal, if not exceeding in atrocity that you seek to punish."

"Viviana," replied Fawkes, in an angry tone, "in an evil hour I consented to your accompanying me. I now repent my acquiescence. But, having passed my word, I cannot retract. You waste time, and exhaust my patience and your own, by these unavailing supplications. When I embarked in this enterprise, I embraced all its dangers, all its crimes if you will, and I shall not shrink from them. The extent of Tresham's treachery is not yet known to us. There may be—and God grant it!—*extenuating* circumstances in his conduct that may save his life. But, *as the case stands* at present, his offence appears of that dye *that nothing can wash it out but his blood.*"

And he turned to depart.

"When do you expect this wretched man?" asked Viviana, arresting him.

"At nightfall," replied Fawkes.

"Oh! that there were any means of warning him of his danger!" she cried.

"There are none," rejoined Fawkes, fiercely—"none that you can adopt; and I must lay my injunctions upon you not to quit your chamber."

So saying, he retired.

Left alone, Viviana became a prey to the most agonising reflections. Despite the strong and almost unaccountable interest she felt in Guy Fawkes, she began to repent the step she had taken in joining him, as calculated to make her a party to his criminal conduct. But this feeling was transient, and was succeeded by a firmer determination to pursue the good work she had undertaken.

"Though slight success has hitherto attended my efforts," she thought, "that is no reason why I should relax them. The time is arrived when I may exert a beneficial influence over him; and it may be that what occurs to-night will prove the first step towards complete triumph. In any case, nothing shall be wanting to prevent the commission of the meditated atrocity."

With this she knelt down, and prayed long and fervently, and arose confirmed and strengthened in her resolution.

Meanwhile, no alteration had taken place in the purposes of the conspirators. Night came, but with it came not Tresham. Catesby, who, up to this time, had managed to restrain his impatience, now arose, and signified his intention of going in search of him, and was with difficulty prevented from carrying his threat into execution by Guy Fawkes, who represented the folly and risk of such a course.

"If he comes not before midnight, we shall know what to think, and how to act," he observed; "but till then, let us remain tranquil."

Keyes and the others adding their persuasions to those of Fawkes, Catesby sat sullenly down, and a profound silence ensued. In this way some hours were passed, when, just at the stroke of midnight, Viviana descended from her room, and appeared amongst them. Her countenance was deathly pale, and she looked anxiously around the assemblage. All, however, with the exception of Fawkes, avoided her gaze.

"Is he come?" she exclaimed at length. "I have listened intently, but have heard nothing. You cannot have murdered him? and yet your looks alarm me. Father Garnet, answer me—is the deed done?"

"No, daughter," replied Garnet, sternly.

"Then he has escaped," she cried, joyfully. "You expected him at nightfall."

"It is not yet too late," replied Fawkes, in a sombre tone; "his death is only deferred."

"Oh! do not say so," she cried, in a voice of agony. "I hoped you had relented."

At this moment a peculiar knock was heard at the door. It was thrice repeated, and the strokes vibrated, though with different effect, through every bosom.

"He is here," cried Catesby, rising.

"Viviana, go to your chamber," commanded Guy Fawkes, grasping her hand, and leading her towards the stairs.

But she resisted his efforts, and fell on her knees.

"I will not go," she cried, in a supplicating tone, "unless you will spare this man's life."

"I have already told you my fixed determination," rejoined Fawkes, fiercely. "If you will not retire of your own free will, I must force you."

"If you attempt it, I will scream and alarm your victim," she replied. "Mr. Catesby," she added, "have my prayers, my entreaties, no weight with you? Will you not grant me his life?"

"No!" replied Catesby, fiercely. "She must be silenced," he added, with a significant look at Fawkes.

"She shall," replied the latter, drawing his poniard. "Viviana!" he continued, in a voice and with a look that left no doubt as to his intentions, "do not compel me to be your destroyer."

As he spoke, the knocking was repeated, and Viviana uttered a prolonged and piercing cry. Guy Fawkes raised his weapon, and was about to strike, but his resolution failed him, and his arm dropped nerveless to his side.

"Your better angel has conquered!" she cried, clasping his knees.

While this was passing, the door was thrown open by Catesby, and Tresham entered the room.

"What means this outcry?" he asked, looking round in alarm. "Ah! what do I see? Viviana Radcliffe here! Did she utter the scream?"

"She did," replied Viviana, rising; "and she hoped to warn you by it. But you were led on by your fate."

"Warn me from what?" ejaculated Tresham, starting. "I am among friends."

"You are among those who have resolved upon your death," replied Viviana.

"Ah!" exclaimed Tresham, making an effort to gain the door and draw his sword.

In both attempts, however, he was foiled, for Catesby intercepted him, while Fawkes and Keyes flung themselves upon him, and, binding his arms together with a sword-belt, forced him into a chair.

"Of what am I accused?" he demanded, in a voice tremulous with rage and terror.

"You shall learn presently," replied Catesby. And he motioned to Fawkes to remove Viviana.

"Let me remain," she cried, fiercely. "My nature is changed, and is become as savage as your own. If blood must be spilt, I will tarry to look upon it."

"This is no place for you, dear daughter," interposed Garnet.

"Nor for you either, father," retorted Viviana, bitterly; "unless you will act as a minister of Christ, and prevent this violence."

"Let her remain, if she will," observed Catesby. "Her presence need not hinder our proceedings."

So saying, he seated himself opposite Tresham, while the two priests placed themselves on either side. Guy Fawkes took up a position on the left of the prisoner, with his drawn dagger in his hand, and Keyes

stationed himself near the door. The unfortunate captive regarded them with terrified glances, and trembled in every limb.

"Thomas Tresham," commenced Catesby, in a stern voice, "you are a sworn brother in our plot. Before I proceed further, I will ask you what should be his punishment who violates his oath and betrays his confederates? We await your answer."

But Tresham remained obstinately silent.

"I will tell you, since you refuse to speak," continued Catesby. "It is death—death by the hands of his associates."

"It may be," replied Tresham; "but I have neither broken my oath, nor betrayed you."

"Your letter to Lord Mounteagle is in my possession," replied Catesby. "Behold it!"

"Perdition!" exclaimed Tresham. "But you will not slay me? I have betrayed nothing—I have revealed nothing: on my soul's salvation, I have not! Spare me! spare me! and I will be a faithful friend in future. I have been indiscreet—I own it—but nothing more. I have mentioned no names. And Lord Mounteagle, as you well know, is as zealous a Catholic as any now present."

"Your letter has been sent to the Earl of Salisbury," pursued Catesby, coldly. "It was from him I obtained it."

"Then Lord Mounteagle has betrayed me," returned Tresham, becoming pale as death.

"Have you nothing further to allege?" demanded Catesby. As Tresham made no answer, he turned to the others, and said, "Is it your judgment he should die?"

All, except Viviana, answered in the affirmative.

"Tresham," continued Catesby, solemnly, "prepare to meet your fate like a man. And do you, father," he added to Garnet, "proceed to shrive him."

"Hold!" cried Viviana, stepping into the midst of them. "Hold!" she exclaimed, in a voice so authoritative, and with a look so commanding, that the whole assemblage were awe-stricken. "If you think to commit this crime with impunity, you are mistaken. I swear by everything sacred, if you take this man's life, I will go forth instantly, and denounce you all to the council. You may stare, sirs, and threaten me, but you shall find I will keep my word."

"We must put her to death too," observed Catesby, in an under tone, to Fawkes, "or we shall have a worse enemy left than Tresham."

"I cannot consent to it," replied Fawkes.

"If you mistrust this person, why not place him in restraint?" pursued Viviana. "You will not mend matters by killing him."

"She says well," observed Garnet; "let us put him in some place of security."

"I am agreed," replied Fawkes.

"And I," added Keyes.

"My judgment, then, is overruled," rejoined Catesby. "But I will not oppose you. We will imprison him in the vault beneath this chamber."

"He must be without light," said Garnet.

"And without arms," added Keyes.

"And without food," muttered Catesby. "He has only exchanged one death for another."

The flag was then raised, and Tresham thrust into the vault, after which it was restored to its former position.

"I have saved you from the lesser crime," cried Viviana to Guy Fawkes, "and, with Heaven's grace, I trust to preserve you from the greater!"

CHAPTER III.—THE ESCAPE PREVENTED.

VIVIANA having retired to her chamber, apparently to rest, a long and anxious consultation was held by the conspirators as to the next steps to be pursued. Garnet was of opinion that, as the Earl of Salisbury was aware of a conspiracy against the state being on foot among the Catholics, their project ought to be deferred, if not altogether abandoned.

"We are sure to be discovered," he said. "Arrests without end will take place. And such rigorous measures will be adopted by the earl, such inquiries instituted, that all will infallibly be brought to light. Besides, we know not what Tresham may have revealed. He denies having betrayed our secret, but no credit can be attached to his assertions."

"Shall we examine him again, father," cried Catesby, "and wring the truth from him by threats or torture?"

"No, my son," replied Garnet; "let him remain where he is till morning. A night of solitary confinement, added to the stings of his own guilty conscience, is likely to produce a stronger effect upon him than any torments we could inflict. He shall be interrogated strictly to-morrow, and, I will answer for it, will make a full confession. But even if he has revealed nothing material, there exists another and equally serious ground of alarm. I allude to your meeting with the earl on the river. I should be the last to counsel bloodshed; but if ever it could be justified, it might have been so in this case."

"I would have slain him if I had had my own way," returned Catesby, with a fierce and reproachful look at Fawkes.

"If I have done wrong, I will speedily repair my error," observed the latter. "Do you desire his death, father? and will you absolve me from the deed?" he added, turning to Garnet.

"It is better as it is," replied Garnet, making a gesture in the negative. "I would not have our high and holy purpose stained by common slaughter. The Power that delivered him into your hands, and stayed them, no doubt preserved him for the general sacrifice. My first fear was lest, having noticed the barrels of powder within the boat, he might have suspected your design. But I am satisfied his eyes were blinded, and his reason benighted, so that he could discern nothing."

"Such was my opinion, father," replied Fawkes. "Let us observe the utmost caution, but proceed at all hazards with the enterprise. If we delay, we fail."

"Right," returned Catesby; "and for that counsel I forgive you for *standing between me and our enemy.*"

Upon this it was agreed that, if nothing occurred in the interim, more powder should be transported to the habitation in Westminster

on the following night,—that Fawkes and Catesby, who might be recognised by Salisbury's description, should keep close house during the day,—and that the rest of the conspirators should be summoned to assist in digging the mine. Prayers were then offered up by the two priests for their preservation from peril, and for success in their enterprise; after which they threw themselves on benches or seats, and courted slumber. All slept soundly except Fawkes, who, not being able to close his eyes from an undefinable apprehension of danger, arose, and cautiously opening the door, kept watch outside.

Shortly afterwards, Viviana, who had waited till all was quiet, softly descended the stairs, and, shading her light, gazed timorously round. Satisfied she was not observed, she glided swiftly and noiselessly to the fireplace, and endeavoured to raise the flag. But it resisted all her efforts, and she was about to abandon the attempt in despair, when she perceived a bolt on one side that had escaped her notice. Hastily withdrawing it, she experienced no further difficulty. The stone revolved on hinges like a trap-door, and, lifting it, she hurried down the steps. Alarmed by her approach, Tresham had retreated to the further end of the vault, and, snatching up a halbert from the pile of weapons, cried, in a voice of desperation—

"Stand off! I am armed, and have severed my bonds. Off, I say! You shall not take me with life."

"Hush!" cried Viviana, putting her finger to her lips; "I am come to set you free."

"Do I behold an inhabitant of this world," cried Tresham, crossing himself, and dropping the halbert, "or some blessed saint? Ah!" he exclaimed, as she advanced towards him, "it is Viviana Radcliffe—my preserver. Pardon, sweet lady. My eyes were dazzled by the light, and your sudden appearance and speech—and I might almost say looks—made me think you were some supernatural being come to deliver me from these bloody-minded men. Where are they?"

"In the room above," she replied, in a whisper—"asleep—and if you speak so loud you will arouse them."

"Let us fly without a moment's delay," returned Tresham in the same tone, and hastily picking up a rapier and a dagger.

"Stay!" cried Viviana, arresting him. "Before you go, you must tell me what you are about to do."

"We will talk of that when we are out of this accursed place," he replied.

"You shall not stir a footstep," she rejoined, placing herself resolutely between him and the outlet, "till you have sworn neither to betray your confederates, nor to do them injury."

"May Heaven requite me if I forgive them!" cried Tresham, between his ground teeth.

"Remember!—you are yet in their power," she rejoined. "One word from me, and they are at your side. Swear!—and swear solemnly, or you do not quit this spot."

Tresham gazed at her fiercely, and griped his dagger, as if determined to free himself at any cost.

"Ah!" she ejaculated, noticing the movement, "you are indeed a traitor. You have neither sense of honour nor gratitude, and I leave you to your fate. Attempt to follow me, and I give the alarm."

"Forgive me, Viviana," he cried, abjectly prostrating himself at

feet, and clinging to the hem of her dress. "I meant only to terrify you; I would not injure you for worlds. Do not leave me with these ruthless cut-throats. They will assuredly murder me. Do not remain with them yourself, or you will come to some dreadful end. Fly with me, and I will place you beyond their reach—will watch over your safety. Or, if you are resolved to brave their fury, let me go, and I will take any oath you propose. As I hope for salvation, I will not betray them."

"Peace!" cried Viviana, contemptuously. "If I set you free, it is not to save you, but them."

"What mean you?" asked Tresham, hesitating.

"Question me not, but follow," she rejoined; "and tread softly, as you value your life."

Tresham needed no caution on this head, and as they emerged from the trap-door in breathless silence, and he beheld the figures of his sleeping foes, he could scarcely muster sufficient courage to pass through them. Motioning him to proceed quickly, Viviana moved towards the door, and to her surprise found it unfastened. Without pausing to consider whence this neglect could arise, she opened it, and Tresham, who trembled in every limb, and walked upon the points of his feet, stepped forth. As he crossed the threshold, however, a powerful grasp was laid upon his shoulder, and a drawn sword presented to his breast, while the voice of Fawkes thundered in his ear, "Who goes there? Speak, or I strike!"

While the fugitive, not daring to answer lest his accents should betray him, endeavoured vainly to break away, Viviana, hearing the struggle, threw open the door, and exclaimed, "It is Tresham; I set him free."

"You!" cried Fawkes, in astonishment. "Wherefore?"

"In the hope that his escape would induce you to abandon your design, and seek safety in flight," she rejoined; "but you have thwarted my purpose."

Fawkes made no reply, but thrust Tresham forcibly into the house, and called to Catesby, who by this time had been roused with the others, to close and bar the door. The command was instantly obeyed, and, as Catesby turned, a strange and fearful group met his view. In the midst stood Tresham, his haggard features and palsied frame bespeaking the extremity of his terror. His sword having been beaten from his grasp by Fawkes, and his dagger wrested from him by Keyes, he was utterly defenceless. Viviana had placed herself between him and his assailants, and, screening him from their attack, cried, "Despatch me. The fault is mine—mine only—and I am ready to pay the penalty. Had I not released him, he would not have attempted to escape. I am the rightful victim."

"She speaks the truth," gasped Tresham. "If she had not offered to liberate me, I should never have thought of flying. Would to Heaven I had never yielded to her solicitations!"

"Peace, craven hound!" exclaimed Fawkes, furiously; "you deserve to die for your meanness and ingratitude, if not for your treachery. And it is for this miserable wretch, Viviana," he added, turning to her, "that you would have placed your friends in such fearful jeopardy—it is for him, who would sacrifice you without scruple to save himself, that you now offer your own life?"

"I deserve your reproaches," she rejoined, in confusion.

"Had I not fortunately intercepted him," pursued Fawkes, "an hour would not have elapsed ere he would have returned with the officers, and we should have changed this dwelling for a dungeon in the Tower—these benches for the rack."

"In pity stab me," cried Viviana, falling at his feet; "but, oh! do not wound me with your words! I have committed a grievous wrong; but I was ignorant of the consequences; and, as I hope for mercy hereafter, my sole motive, beyond compassion for this wretched man, was to terrify you into relinquishing your dreadful project."

"You have acted wrongfully—very wrongfully, Viviana," interposed Garnet; "but since you are fully convinced of your error, no more need be said. There are seasons when the heart must be closed against compassion, and when mercy becomes injustice. Go to your chamber, and leave us to deal with this unhappy man."

"To-morrow you must quit us," observed Fawkes, as she passed him.

"Quit you!" she exclaimed. "I will never offend again."

"I will not trust you," replied Fawkes, "unless—but it is useless to impose restrictions upon you which you will not—perhaps cannot—observe."

"Impose any restrictions you please," replied Viviana; "but do not bid me leave you."

"The time is come when we *must* separate," rejoined Fawkes. "See you not that the course we are taking is slippery with blood, and beset with perils which the firmest of your sex could not encounter?"

"I will encounter them, nevertheless," replied Viviana. "Be merciful," she added, pointing to Tresham, "and mercy shall be shown you in your hour of need." And she slowly withdrew.

While this was passing, Catesby addressed a few words aside to Keyes and Oldcorne, and now, stepping forward, and fixing his eye steadily upon the prisoner, to note the effect of his speech upon him, said, "I have devised a plan by which the full extent of Tresham's treachery can be ascertained."

"You do not mean to torture him, I trust?" exclaimed Garnet, uneasily.

"No, father," replied Catesby; "if torture is inflicted at all, it will be upon the mind, not the body."

"Then it will be no torture," observed Garnet. "State your plan, my son."

"It is this," returned Catesby. "He shall write a letter to Lord Mounteagle, stating that he has important revelations to make to him, and entreating him to come hither unattended."

"Here!" exclaimed Fawkes.

"Here," repeated Catesby; "and alone. We will conceal ourselves in such a manner that we may overhear what passes between them; and, if any attempt is made by the villain to betray our presence, he shall be immediately shot. By this means we cannot fail to elicit the truth."

"I approve your plan, my son," replied Garnet; "but who will convey the letter to Lord Mounteagle?"

"I will," replied Fawkes. "Let it be prepared at once, and the cas

will be thought the more urgent. I will watch him, and see that he comes unattended, or give you timely warning."

"Enough," rejoined Garnet. "Let writing materials be procured, and I will dictate the letter."

Tresham, meanwhile, exhibited no misgiving; but, on the contrary, his countenance brightened up as the plan was approved.

"My life will be spared if you find I have not deceived you, will it not?" he asked, in a supplicating voice.

"Assuredly," replied Garnet.

"Give me pen and ink, then," he cried, "and I will write whatever you desire."

"Our secret is safe," whispered Catesby to Garnet. "It is useless to test him further."

"I think so," replied Garnet. "Would we had made this experiment sooner?"

"Do not delay, I entreat you," implored Tresham. "I am eager to prove my innocence."

"We are satisfied with the proof we have already obtained," returned Garnet. Tresham dropped on his knees in speechless gratitude.

"We are spared the necessity of being your executioners, my son," pursued Garnet, "and I rejoice at it. But I cannot acquit you of the design to betray us; and till you have unburdened your whole soul to me, and proved by severe and self-inflicted penance that you are really penitent, you must remain a captive within these walls."

"I will disguise nothing from you, father," replied Tresham, "and will strive to expiate my offence by the severest penance you choose to inflict."

"Do this, my son," rejoined Garnet; "leave no doubt of your sincerity, and you may be yet restored to the place you have forfeited, and become a sharer in our great enterprise."

"I will never trust him more," observed Fawkes.

"Nor I," added Keyes.

"I will," rejoined Catesby: "not that I have more faith in him than either of you; but I will so watch him that he shall not dare to betray us. Nay, more," he added, in an under tone, to Garnet, "I will turn his treachery to account. He will be a useful spy upon our enemies."

"If he can be relied on," observed Garnet.

"After this you need have no fears," rejoined Catesby, with a significant smile.

"The first part of your penance, my son," said Garnet, addressing Tresham, "shall be to pass the night in solitary vigil and prayer within the vault. Number your transgressions, and reflect upon their enormity. Consider not only the injury your conduct might have done us, but the holy church of which you are so sinful a member. Weigh over all this, and to-morrow I will hear your confession; when, if I find you in a state of grace, absolution shall not be refused."

Tresham humbly bowed his head in token of acquiescence. He was *then led to the vault*, and the flag closed over him as before. This done, *after a brief conversation*, the others again stretched themselves on the floor, and sought repose

CHAPTER IV.—THE MINE.

SOME days elapsed before the conspirators ventured forth from their present abode. They had intended to remove the rest of the powder without loss of time, but were induced to defer their purpose on the representations of Tresham, who stated to Garnet that in his opinion they would run a great and needless risk. Before the expiration of a week, Tresham's apparent remorse for his perfidy, added to his seeming zeal, had so far reinstated him in the confidence of his associates, that he was fully absolved of his offence by Garnet; and, after taking fresh oaths, of even greater solemnity than the former, was again admitted to the league. Catesby, however, who placed little faith in his protestations, never lost sight of him for an instant, and, even if he meditated an escape, he had no opportunity of effecting it.

A coldness, stronger on his side than hers, seemed to have arisen between Viviana and Guy Fawkes. Whenever she descended to the lower room he withdrew on some excuse; and though he never urged her departure by words, his looks plainly bespoke that he desired it. Upon one occasion she found him alone, the others being at the time within the vault. He was whetting the point of his dagger, and did not hear her approach until she stood beside him. He was slightly confused, and a deep ruddy stain flushed his swarthy cheeks and brow; but he averted his gaze, and continued his occupation in silence.

"Why do you shun me?" asked Viviana, laying her hand gently upon his shoulder. And, as he did not answer, she repeated the question in a broken voice. Guy Fawkes then looked up, and perceived that her eyes were filled with tears.

"I shun you, Viviana, for two reasons," he replied, gravely, but kindly; "first, because I would have no ties of sympathy to make me cling to the world, or care for it—and I feel that, if I suffer myself to be interested about you, this will not long be the case: secondly, and chiefly, because you are constantly striving to turn me from my fixed purpose; and though your efforts have been and will be unavailing, yet I would not be exposed to them further."

"You fear me, because you think I shall shake your resolution," she rejoined, with a forced smile. "But I will trouble you no more. Nay, if you wish it, I will go."

"It were better," replied Fawkes, in accents of deep emotion, and taking her hand. "Painful as will be the parting with you, I shall feel more easy when it is over. It grieves me to the soul to see you—the daughter of the proud, the wealthy Sir William Radcliffe—an inmate of this wretched abode, surrounded by desperate men, whose actions you disapprove, and whose danger you are compelled to share. Think how it would add to my suffering if our plot—which Heaven avert!—should be discovered, and you be involved in it."

"Do not think of it," replied Viviana.

"I cannot banish it from my thoughts," continued Fawkes. "I cannot reconcile it to my feelings that one so young, so beautiful, should be thus treated. *Dwelling on this idea unmans me—unfits me for sterner duties. The great crisis is at hand, and I must live only for it.*"

"*Live for it, then,*" rejoined Viviana; "but oh! let me remain wit'

you till the blow is struck. Something tells me I may yet be useful to you—may save you."

"No more of this, if you would indeed remain," rejoined Guy Fawkes, sternly. "Regard me as a sword in the hand of fate, which cannot be turned aside—as a bolt launched from the cloud, and shattering all in its course, which may not be stopped—as something terrible, exterminating, immovable. Regard me as this, and say whether I am not to be shunned?"

"No," replied Viviana; "I am as steadfast as yourself. I will remain."

Guy Fawkes gazed at her in surprise mixed with admiration, and, pressing her hand affectionately, said,

"I applaud your resolution. If I had a daughter, I should wish her to be like you."

"You promised to be a father to me," she rejoined. "How can you be so if I leave you?"

"How can I be so if you stay?" returned Fawkes, mournfully. "No; you must indulge no filial tenderness for one so utterly unable to requite it as myself. Fix your thoughts wholly on Heaven. Pray for the restoration of our holy religion—for the success of the great enterprise—and, haply, your prayers may prevail."

"I cannot pray for that," she replied, "for I do not wish it success. But I will pray—and fervently—that all danger may be averted from your head."

At this moment Catesby and Keyes emerged from the vault, and Viviana hurried to her chamber. As soon as it grew dark the remaining barrels of powder were brought out of the cellar and carefully placed in the boat. Straw was then heaped upon them, and the whole covered with a piece of tarpaulin, as upon the former occasion. It being necessary to cross the river more than once, the conduct of the first and most hazardous passage was intrusted to Fawkes, and, accompanied by Keyes and Bates, both of whom were well armed, he set out a little before midnight. It was a clear, starlight night; but, as the moon had not yet risen, they were under no apprehension of discovery. The few craft they encountered, bent probably on some suspicious errand like themselves, paid no attention to them; and, plying their oars swiftly, they shot under the low parapet edging the gardens of the parliament-house, just as the deep bell of the Abbey tolled forth the hour of twelve. Keeping in the shade, they silently approached the stairs. No one was there, not even a waterman to attend to the numerous wherries moored to the steps; and, without losing a moment, they sprang ashore, and, concealing the barrels beneath their cloaks, glided like phantoms summoned by the witching hour along the passage formed by two high walls leading to Old Palace Yard, and speedily reached the gate of the habitation. In this way, and with the utmost rapidity, the whole of the fearful cargo was safely deposited in the garden; and, leaving the others to carry it into the house, Guy Fawkes returned to the boat. As he was about to push off, two persons rushed to the stairhead, and the foremost, evidently mistaking him for a waterman, called to him to take them across the river.

"I am no waterman, friend," replied Fawkes; "and am engaged on business of my own. Seek a wherry elsewhere."

"By Heaven!" exclaimed the new comer, in accents of surprise, "it is Guy Fawkes. Do you not know me?"

"Can it be Humphrey Chetham?" cried Fawkes, equally astonished.

"It is," replied the other. "This meeting is most fortunate. I was in search of you, having somewhat of importance to communicate to Viviana."

"State it quickly, then," returned Fawkes; "I cannot tarry here much longer."

"I will go with you," rejoined Chetham, springing into the boat, and followed by his companion. "You must take me to her."

"Impossible!" cried Fawkes, rising angrily; "neither can I permit you to accompany me. I am busied about my own concerns, and will not be interrupted."

"At least tell me where I can find Viviana," persisted Chetham.

"Not now—not now," rejoined Fawkes, impatiently. "Meet me to-morrow night at this hour, in the Great Sanctuary at the further side of the Abbey, and you shall learn all you desire to know."

"Why not now?" rejoined Chetham, earnestly. "You need not fear me. I am no spy, and will reveal nothing."

"But your companion?" hesitated Fawkes.

"It is only Martin Heydocke," answered Chetham. "He can keep a close tongue as well as his master."

"Well, sit down, then," returned Fawkes, sullenly. "There will be less risk in taking them to Lambeth," he muttered, "than in loitering here." And rowing with great swiftness, he soon gained the centre of the stream. "And so," he observed, resting for a moment on his oars, "you still cherish your attachment to Viviana, I see. Nay, never start, man. I am no enemy to your suit, though others may be. And if she would place herself at my disposal, I would give her to you—certain that it would be to one upon whom her affections are fixed."

"Do you think any change likely to take place in her sentiments towards me?" faltered Chetham. "May I indulge a hope?"

"I would not have you despair," replied Fawkes; "because, as far as I have noticed, women are not apt to adhere to their resolutions in matters of the heart; and because, as I have just said, she loves you, and I see no reasonable bar to your union."

"You give me new life," cried Chetham, transported with joy. "Oh! that you, who have so much influence with her, would speak in my behalf!"

"Nay, you must plead your own cause," replied Fawkes. "I cannot hold out much hope at present; for recent events have cast a deep gloom over her spirit, and she appears to be a prey to melancholy. Let this wear off—and with one so young and so firm minded it is sure to do so—and then your suit may be renewed. Urge it when you may, you have my best wishes for success, and shall have my warmest efforts to second you."

Humphrey Chetham murmured his thanks in accents almost unintelligible from emotion, and Guy Fawkes continued—

"It would be dangerous for you to disembark with me; but when I put you ashore, I will point out the dwelling at present occupied by Viviana. You can visit it as early as you please to-morrow. You will find no one with her but Father Oldcorne, and I need scarcely add,

will gladden me to the heart to find on my return that she has yielded to your entreaties."

"I cannot thank you," cried Chetham, warmly grasping his hand; "but I hope to find some means of evincing my gratitude."

"Prove it by maintaining the strictest secrecy as to all you may see or hear—or even suspect—within the dwelling you are about to visit," returned Guy Fawkes. "Knowing that I am dealing with a man of honour, I require no stronger obligation than your word."

"You have it," replied Chetham, solemnly.

"Your worship shall have my oath if you desire it," remarked Martin Heydocke.

"No," rejoined Fawkes; "your master will answer for your fidelity."

Shortly after this Guy Fawkes pulled ashore, and his companions landed. After pointing out the solitary habitation which possessed greater interest in Humphrey Chetham's eyes than the proud structures he had just quitted, and extracting a promise that the young merchant would not approach it till the morrow, he rowed off, and, while the others proceeded to Lambeth in search of a lodging for the night, made the best of his way to the little creek, and entered the house.

He found the other conspirators anxiously awaiting his arrival, and the certainty afforded by his presence that the powder had been landed in safety gave general satisfaction. Preparations were immediately made for another voyage. A large supply of provisions, consisting of baked meat of various kinds, hard-boiled eggs, pasties, bread, and other viands, calculated to serve for a week's consumption, without the necessity of having recourse to any culinary process, and which had been previously procured with that view, together with a few flasks of wine, occupied the place in the boat lately assigned to the powder. At the risk of overloading the vessel, they likewise increased its burden by a quantity of mining implements—spades, pickaxes, augers, and wrenching-irons. To these were added as many swords, calivers, pikes, and petronels as the space left would accommodate. Garnet and Catesby then embarked, the former having taken an affectionate farewell of Viviana, whom he committed, with the strictest injunction to watch over her, to the care of Father Oldcorne. Guy Fawkes lingered for a moment, doubting whether he should mention his rencounter with Humphrey Chetham. He was the more undecided from the deep affliction in which she was plunged. At last he determined upon slightly hinting at the subject, and to be guided as to what he said further by the manner in which the allusion was received.

"And you decide upon remaining here till we return, Viviana?" he said. She made a sign in the affirmative.

"And you will see no one?"

"No one," she answered.

"But should any old friend find his way hither—Humphrey Chetham, for instance—will you not receive him?"

"Why do you single out *him*?" demanded Viviana, inquiringly. "Is he in London? Have you seen him?"

"*I have*," replied Guy Fawkes. "I accidentally met him to-night, and have shown him this dwelling. He will come hither to-morrow."

"*I wanted only this to make me thoroughly wretched*," cried

Viviana, clasping her hands with anguish. "Oh! what unhappy chance threw him across your path? Why did you tell him I was here? Why give him a hope that I would see him? But I will *not* see him. I will quit this house rather than be exposed to the meeting."

"What means this sudden excitement, Viviana?" cried Guy Fawkes, greatly surprised by her agitation. "Why should a visit from Humphrey Chetham occasion you uneasiness?"

"I know not," she answered, blushing deeply; "but I will not hazard it."

"I thought you superior to your sex," rejoined Fawkes, "and should never have suspected you of waywardness or caprice."

"You charge me with failings that do not belong to me," she answered. "I am neither wayward nor capricious, but I would be willingly spared the pain of an interview with one whom I thought I loved."

"Thought you loved!" echoed Fawkes, in increased astonishment.

"Ay, *thought*," repeated Viviana, "for I have since examined my heart, and find he has no place in it."

"You might be happy with him, Viviana," rejoined Fawkes, reproachfully.

"I *might* have been," she replied, "had circumstances favoured our union. But I should not be so now. Recent events have wrought an entire change in my feelings. Were I to abandon my resolution of retiring to a cloister—were I to return to the world—and were such an event possible as that Humphrey Chetham should conform to the faith of Rome—still I would not—could not wed him."

"I grieve to hear it," replied Fawkes.

"Would *you* have me wed him?" she cried, in a slightly mortified tone.

"In good sooth would I," replied Fawkes; "and I repeat my firm conviction, you would be happier with him than with one more highly born, and of less real worth."

Viviana made no reply, and her head declined upon her bosom.

"You will see him," pursued Fawkes, taking her hand, "if only to tell him what you have just told me."

"Since you desire it, I will," she replied, fixing a look of melancholy tenderness upon him; "but it will cost me a bitter pang."

"I would not tax you with it if I did not think it needful," returned Fawkes. "And now, farewell."

"Farewell—it may be for ever," replied Viviana, sadly.

"The boat is ready, and the tide ebbing," cried Catesby, impatiently, at the door. "We shall be aground if you tarry longer."

"I come," replied Fawkes. And, waving an adieu to Viviana, he departed.

"Strange!" he muttered to himself as he took his way to the creek. "I could have sworn she was in love with Humphrey Chetham. Who can have superseded him in her regard? Not Catesby, of a surety. 'Tis a perplexing sex. The best are fickle. Heaven be praised! I have long been proof against their wiles."

Thus musing, he sprang into the skiff, and, assisting Catesby to push it into deep water, *seized an oar, and exerted himself stoutly to make up for lost time. The second voyage was as prosperous as the first. A thick veil of cloud had curtained the stars; the steps were desert*

as before; and the provisions, arms, and implements were securely conveyed to their destination.

Thus far fortune seemed to favour their undertaking, and Garnet, falling on his knees, offered up the most fervent thanksgivings. Prayers over, they descended to the cellar, and their first care was to seek out a place as free from damp as possible, where the powder could be deposited till the excavation, which it was foreseen would be a work of time and great labour, was completed. A dry corner being found, the barrels were placed in it, and carefully concealed with billets of wood and coals, so as to avert suspicion in case of search. This, with other arrangements, occupied the greater part of the night, and the commencement of the important undertaking was deferred till the morrow, when an increase of their party was anticipated.

Throughout the whole of the day no one stirred forth. The windows were kept closed, the doors locked; and, as no fires were lighted, the house had the appearance of being uninhabited. In the course of the morning they underwent considerable alarm. Some mischievous urchins having scaled the garden-wall, one of them fell within it, and his cries so terrified his playmates that they dropped on the other side, and left him. The conspirators reconnoitred the unhappy urchin, who continued his vociferations in a loud key, through the holes in the shutters, uncertain what to do, and fearing that this trifling mischance might lead to serious consequences, when the subject of their uneasiness relieved them by scrambling up the wall near the door, and so effecting a retreat. With this exception, nothing material occurred till evening, when their expected associates arrived.

The utmost caution was observed in admitting them. The new comers were provided with a key of the garden-gate, but a signal was given and repeated before the house-door was opened by Bates, to whom the office of porter was intrusted. As soon as the latter had satisfied himself that all was right, by unmasking a dark lantern, and throwing its radiance upon the faces of the elder Wright, Rookwood, and Percy, he stamped his foot thrice, and the conspirators emerged from their hiding-places. A warm greeting passed between the confederates, and they adjourned to a lower chamber, adjoining the vault, where the sound of their voices could not be overheard, and where, while partaking of a frugal meal—for they desired to eke out their store of provisions as long as possible—they discoursed upon their plans, and all that had occurred since their last meeting. Nothing was said of the treachery of Tresham—his recent conduct, as already observed, having been such as to restore him in a great degree to the confidence of his companions. Percy, whose office as gentleman-pensioner gave him the best opportunities of hearing court-whispers and secrets, informed them it was rumoured that the Earl of Salisbury had obtained a clue to some Catholic plot, whether their own he could not say; but it would seem, from all that could be gathered, that his endeavours to trace it out had been frustrated.

"Where is Lord Mounteagle?" demanded Catesby.

"At his mansion near Hoxton," replied Percy.

"Have you observed him much about the court of late, or with the Earl of Salisbury?" pursued Catesby.

"No," replied Percy. "Yet, now I bethink me, I did observe them

together, and in earnest conversation about a week ago. But Lord Mounteagle knows nothing of *our* plot."

"Hum!" exclaimed Catesby, shrugging his shoulders, while significant looks were exchanged by the others, and Tresham hung his head. "Lord Mounteagle may not know that you, or I, or Fawkes, or Rookwood, is conspiring against the state, but he knows that a plot is hatching amongst our party. It is from him that the Earl of Salisbury derived his information."

"Amazement!" exclaimed Percy.

"A good Catholic, and betray his fellows!" cried Rookwood: "this passes my comprehension. Are you sure of it?"

"Unhappily we are so, my son," replied Garnet, gravely.

"We will speak of this hereafter," interposed Catesby. "I have a plan to get his lordship into our power, and make him serve our purposes in spite of himself. We will outwit the crafty Salisbury. Can any one tell if Tresham's sudden disappearance has been noticed?"

"His household report that he is on a visit to Sir Everard Digby, at Gothurst," replied Rookwood. "I called at his residence yesterday, and was informed that a letter had just been received from him, dated from that place. His departure, they said, was sudden, but his letter fully accounted for it."

"The messenger who bore that letter had only to travel from Lambeth," observed Catesby, smiling.

"So I conclude," returned Rookwood.

"And now that our meal is ended, let us to work," cried Fawkes, who had taken no part in the foregoing conversation. "I will strike the first blow," he added, rising, and seizing a mattock.

"Hold, my son!" exclaimed Garnet, arresting him. "The work upon which the redemption of our holy church hangs must be commenced with due solemnity."

"You are right, father," replied Fawkes, humbly.

Headed by Garnet, bearing a crucifix, they then repaired to the vault. A silver chalice, filled with holy water, was carried by Fawkes, and two lighted tapers by Catesby. Kneeling down before that part of the wall against which operations were about to be directed, and holding the crucifix towards it, Garnet commenced praying in a low but earnest tone, gradually raising his voice and increasing in fervour as he proceeded. The others knelt around him, and the whole formed a strange and deeply interesting group. The vault itself harmonised with its occupants. It was of great antiquity; and its solid stone masonry had acquired a time-worn hoary tint. In width it was about nine feet, and of corresponding height, supported by a semicircular arch, and its length was more than twenty feet.

The countenances of the conspirators showed that they were powerfully moved by what was passing; but next to Garnet, Guy Fawkes exhibited the greatest enthusiasm. His ecstatic looks and gestures evinced the strong effect produced upon his superstitious character by the scene. Garnet concluded his prayer, as follows:—

"Thus far, O Lord, we have toiled in darkness and in difficulty; but we have now arrived at a point where all Thy support is needed. *Do not desert us, we beseech Thee, but let Thy light guide us through these gloomy paths. Nerve our arms, sharpen our weapons, as*

crumble these hard and flinty stones, so that they may yield to our efforts. Aid our enterprise, if Thou approvest it, and it be really, as in our ignorance we believe it to be, for the welfare of Thy holy church, and the confusion of its enemies. Bear witness, O Lord, that we devote ourselves wholly and entirely to this one end—and that we implore success only for Thy glory and honour.”

With this he arose, and the following strains were chanted by the whole assemblage:—

Hymn of the Conspirators.

The heretic and heathen, Lord,
Consume with fire, cut down with sword;
The spoilers from Thy temples thrust,
Their altars trample in the dust.
False princes and false priests lay low,
Their habitations fill with woe;
Scatter them, Lord, with sword and flame,
And bring them utterly to shame.
Thy vengeful arm no longer stay,
Arise! O Lord of Hosts, and slay.
So shall Thy fallen worship be
Restored to its prosperity.

This hymn raised the enthusiasm of the conspirators to the highest pitch, and such was the effect produced by it, as it rolled in sullen echoes along the arched roof of the vault, that several of them drew their swords, and crossed the blades with looks of the most determined devotion to their cause. When it was ended, Garnet recited other prayers, and sprinkled holy water upon the wall, and upon every implement about to be used, bestowing a separate benediction on each. As he delivered the pickaxe to Guy Fawkes, he cried in a solemn voice, “Strike, my son, in the name of the Most High, and in behalf of our holy religion—strike!”

Guy Fawkes raised the weapon, and, stimulated by excitement, threw the whole strength of his arm into the blow. A large piece of the granite was chipped off, but the mattock snapped in twain. Guy Fawkes looked deeply disconcerted, and Garnet, though he concealed his emotion, was filled with dismay.

“Let me take your place,” cried Keyes, advancing as Guy Fawkes retired.

Keyes was a powerful man, and, exerting his energies, he buried the point of the pickaxe so deeply in the mortar that he could not remove it unassisted. These untoward circumstances cast a slight damp upon their ardour; but Catesby, who perceived it, went more cautiously to work, and in a short time succeeded with great labour in getting out the large stone upon which the others had expended so much useless exertion. The sight restored their confidence, and as many as could work in the narrow space joined him. But they found that their task was much more arduous than they had anticipated. More than hour elapsed before they could loosen another stone, and though they laboured with the utmost perseverance, relieving each other by turns, they had made but a small breach when morning arrived. The stones were as hard and unyielding as iron, and the mortar in some places harder than the stones. After a few hours’ rest they resumed their task. Still they made

but small progress; and it was not until the third day that they had excavated a hole sufficiently wide and deep to admit one man within it. They were now arrived at a compost of gravel and flint stones; and if they had found their previous task difficult, what they had now to encounter was infinitely more so. Their implements made little or no impression on this unyielding substance; and, though they toiled incessantly, the work proceeded with disheartening slowness. The stones and rubbish were conveyed at dead of night in hampers into the garden, and buried.

One night, when they were labouring as usual, Guy Fawkes, who was foremost in the excavation, thought he heard the tolling of a bell within the wall. He instantly suspended his task, and, being convinced that he was not deceived, crept out of the hole, and made a sign to the others to listen. Each had heard the awful sound before; but as it was partially drowned by the noise of the pickaxe, it had not produced much impression upon them, as they attributed it to some vibration in the wall, caused by the echo of the blows. But it was now distinctly audible—deep, clear, slow, like a passing-bell—but so solemn, so unearthly, that its tones froze the blood in their veins. They listened for a while in speechless astonishment, scarcely daring to look at each other, and expecting each moment that the building would fall upon them and bury them alive. The light of a single lantern, placed upon an upturned basket, fell upon figures rigid as statues, and countenances charged with awe.

"My arm is paralysed," said Guy Fawkes, breaking silence; "I can work no more."

"Try holy water, father," cried Catesby. "If it proceeds from aught of evil, that will quell it."

The chalice containing the sacred lymph was brought, and, pronouncing a solemn exorcism, Garnet sprinkled the wall.

The sound immediately ceased.

"It is as I thought, father," observed Catesby; "it is the delusion of an evil spirit."

As he spoke, the tolling of the mysterious bell was again heard, and more solemnly, more slowly than before.

"Sprinkle the wall again, in Heaven's name, father!" cried Fawkes, crossing himself devoutly. "Avoid thee, Sathanas!"

Garnet complied, and, throwing holy water upon the stones, the same result followed.

CHAPTER V.—THE CAPTURE OF VIVIANA.

On the morning after his encounter with Guy Fawkes, Humphrey Chetham, accompanied by Martin Heydocke, took his way to Lambeth Marsh. With a throbbing heart he approached the miserable dwelling he knew to be inhabited by Viviana, and could scarcely summon courage to knock at the door. His first summons not being answered, he repeated it more loudly, and he then perceived the face of Father Oldcorne at the window, who, having satisfied himself that it was a friend, admitted him and his attendant.

"You were expected, my son," said the priest, after a friendly greeting. "Guy Fawkes has prepared Viviana for your coming."

"Will she not see me?" demanded the young merchant, uneasily.

"I believe so," replied Oldcorne. "But I will apprise her of your arrival. Be seated, my son."

He then carefully fastened the door, and repaired to Viviana's chamber, leaving Chetham in that state of tremor and anxiety which a lover, hoping to behold his mistress, only knows.

It was some time before Viviana appeared, and the young merchant, whose heart beat violently at the sound of her footstep, was startled by the alteration in her looks, and the extreme coldness of her manner. Oldcorne was with her, and, motioning Martin Heydocke to follow him, the youthful pair were left alone.

"You desire to see me, I am given to understand, sir," observed Viviana, in a freezing tone.

"I have journeyed to London for that express purpose," replied Humphrey Chetham, tremulously.

"I am much beholden to you, sir," returned Viviana, in the same repelling tone as before; "but I regret you should have taken so much trouble on my account."

"To serve you is happiness, not trouble, Viviana," replied Humphrey Chetham, ardently; "and I am overjoyed at finding an opportunity of proving my devotion."

"I have yet to learn what service I must thank you for," she returned.

"I can scarcely say that I am warranted in thus intruding upon you," replied Chetham, greatly abashed; "but, having learnt from my servant, Martin Heydocke, that Dr. Dee had set out for London, with the view of seeking you out and withdrawing you from your present associates, I was determined to be beforehand with him, and to acquaint you, if possible, with his intentions."

"What you say surprises me," replied Viviana. "Doctor Dee has no right to interfere with my actions. Nor should I obey him were he to counsel me, as is scarcely probable, to quit my companions."

"I know not what connexion there may be between you to justify the interposition of his authority," replied Chetham; "neither did I tarry to inquire. But, presuming from what I heard that he *would* attempt to exercise some control over you, I set out at once, and, without guide to your retreat, or the slightest knowledge of it, was fortunate enough, on the very night of my arrival in London, to chance upon Guy Fawkes, who directed me to you."

"I am aware of it," was the chilling answer.

"I will not avouch," pursued Chetham, passionately, "that I have not been actuated as much by an irrepressible desire to see you again, as by anxiety to apprise you of Doctor Dee's coming. I wanted only a slight excuse to myself to induce me to yield to my inclinations. Your departure made me wretched. I thought I had more control over myself; but I find I cannot live without you."

"Alas! alas!" cried Viviana, in a troubled tone, and losing all her self-command. "I expected this. Why—why did you come?"

"I have told you my motive," replied Chetham; "but, oh! do not *reproach me!*"

"*I do not desire to do so,*" returned Viviana, with a look of agony. "*I bitterly reproach myself that I cannot meet you as of old. But I*

would rather—far rather—have encountered Doctor Dee, had he come hither resolved to exert all his magical power to force me away, than have met you.”

“Have I unwittingly offended you, Viviana?” asked Chetham, in astonishment.

“Oh! no—no—no!” she replied; “you have not offended me; but——”

“But what?” he cried, anxiously.

“I would rather have died than see you,” she answered.

“I will not inquire wherefore,” rejoined Chetham, “because I too well divine the cause. I am no longer what I was to you.”

“Press this matter no further, I pray of you,” returned Viviana, in much confusion, and blushing deeply. “I shall ever esteem you—ever feel the warmest gratitude to you. And what matters it whether my heart is estranged from you or not, since I can never wed you?”

“What matters it?” repeated the young merchant in accents of despair—“it matters much. Drowning love will cling to straws. The thought that I was beloved by you, though I could never hope to possess your hand, reconciled me in some degree to my fate. But now,” he added, covering his face with his hands—“now, my heart is crushed.”

“Nay, say not so,” cried Viviana, in a voice of the deepest emotion. “I do love you—as a sister.”

“That is small comfort,” rejoined Chetham, bitterly. “I echo your own wish. Would we had never met again! I might, at least, have deluded myself into the belief that you loved me.”

“It would have been better so,” she returned. “I would inflict pain on no one—far less on you, whom I regard so much, and to whom I owe so much.”

“You owe me nothing, Viviana,” rejoined Chetham. “All I desired was to serve you. In the midst of the dangers we have shared together, I felt no alarm except for your sake. I have done nothing—nothing. Would I had died for you!”

“Calm yourself, sir, I entreat you,” she returned.

“You did love me *once*?” demanded Chetham, suddenly.

“I thought so,” she answered.

The young merchant uttered an exclamation of anguish, and a mournful pause ensued, broken only by his groans.

“Answer me, Viviana,” he said, turning abruptly upon her—“answer me, and, in mercy, answer truly—do you love another?”

“It is a question I cannot answer,” she replied, becoming ashy pale.

“Your looks speak for you!” he vociferated, in a terrible tone. “You do! His name?—his name?—that I may wreak my vengeance upon him.”

“Your violence terrifies me,” returned Viviana, withdrawing the hand he had seized. “I must put an end to this interview.”

“Pardon me, Viviana!” cried Chetham, falling on his knees before her—“in pity pardon me! I am not myself. I shall be calmer presently. But if you knew the anguish of the wound you have inflicted, you would not add to it.”

“Heaven knows I would not!” she returned, motioning him to rise.

"And if it will lighten your suffering, know that the love I feel for another—if love, indeed, it be—is as hopeless as your own. But it is not a love of which even *you* could be jealous. It is a higher and a holier passion. It is affection mixed with admiration, and purified from all its grossness. It is more, perhaps, than the love of a daughter for her father—but it is nothing more. I shall never wed him I love—could not if I would. Nay, I would shun him, if I did not feel that the hour will soon come when the extent of my affection must be proved."

"This is strange sophistry," returned Chetham; "and you may deceive yourself by it, but you cannot deceive me. You love as all ardent natures do love. But in what way do you mean to prove your affection?"

"Perhaps, by the sacrifice of my life," she answered.

"I can tell you who is the object of your affections," said Chetham. "It is Guy Fawkes."

"I will not deny it," replied Viviana; "he is."

"Hear me, then," exclaimed Chetham, who appeared inexpressibly relieved by the discovery he had made. "In my passage across the river with him last night, our conversation turned on the one subject ever nearest my heart, yourself—and Guy Fawkes not only bade me not despair, but promised to aid my suit."

"And he kept his word," replied Viviana; "for while announcing your proposed visit, he urged me strongly in your behalf."

"Then he knows not of your love for him?" demanded Chetham.

"He not only knows it not, but never shall know it from me—nor must he know it from you, sir," rejoined Viviana, energetically.

"Fear it not," said Chetham, sighing. "It is a secret I shall carefully preserve."

"And now that you are in possession of it," she answered, "I no longer feel your presence as a restraint. Let me still regard you as a friend."

"Be it so," replied Humphrey Chetham, mournfully, "and as a friend let me entreat you to quit this place, and abandon your present associates. I will not seek to turn your heart from Fawkes—nor will I try to regain the love I have lost. But let me implore you to pause ere you irretrievably mix yourself up with the fortunes of one so desperate. I am too well aware that he is engaged in a fearful plot against the state, though I know not its precise nature."

"You will not betray him?" she cried.

"I will not, though he is my rival," returned Chetham. "But others may—nay, perhaps have done so already."

"Whom do you suspect?" demanded Viviana, in the greatest alarm.

"I fear Doctor Dee," replied the young merchant; "but I know nothing, certainly. My servant, Martin Heydocke, who is in the doctor's confidence, intimated as much to me, and I have reason to think that his journey to town, under the pretext of searching for you, *is undertaken for the purpose of tracing out the conspirators, and delivering them to the government.*"

"Is he arrived in London?" inquired Viviana, eagerly.

"I should think not," returned Chetham. "I passed him, four

days ago, on this side Leicester, in company with Kelley and Topcliffe."

"If the wretch Topcliffe was with him, your conjectures are too well founded," she replied. "I must warn Guy Fawkes instantly of his danger."

"Command my services in any way," said Chetham.

"I know not what to do," cried Viviana, after a pause, during which she betrayed the greatest agitation. "I dare not seek him out;—and yet, if I do not, he may fall into the hands of the enemy. I must see him at all hazards."

"Suffer me to go with you," implored Chetham. "You may rely upon my secrecy. And now I have a double motive for desiring to preserve Fawkes."

"You are, indeed, truly noble-hearted and generous," replied Viviana; "and I would fully confide in you. But, if you were to be seen by the others, you would be certainly put to death. Not even Fawkes could save you."

"I will risk it, if you desire it, and it will save *him*," replied the young merchant, devotedly. "Nay, I will go alone."

"That were to insure your destruction," she answered. "No—no—it must not be. I will consult with Father Oldcorne."

With this she hurried out of the room, and returned in a short time with the priest.

"Father Oldcorne is of opinion that our friends must be apprised of their danger," she said. "And he thinks it needful we should both go to their retreat, that no hinderance may be offered to our flight, in case such a measure should be resolved upon."

"You cannot accompany us, my son," added Oldcorne; "for though I am as fully assured of your fidelity as Viviana, and would confide my life to you, there are those who will not so trust you, and who might rejoice in the opportunity of removing you."

"Viviana!" exclaimed Chetham, looking entreatingly at her.

"For my sake—if not for your own—do not urge this further," she returned. "There are already dangers and difficulties enow without adding to them. You would be safer amid a horde of robbers than amidst these men."

"And is it to such persons you commit yourself?" cried Chetham, reproachfully. "Oh! be warned by me ere it is too late! Abandon them!"

"It is too late already," cried Viviana; "the die is cast."

"Then I can only lament it," returned Chetham, sadly. "Suffer me, at least, to accompany you to some place near their retreat, that you may summon me in case of need."

"There can be no objection to that, Viviana," observed Oldcorne, "provided Humphrey Chetham will promise not to follow us."

"Readily," replied the young merchant.

"I am unwilling to expose him to further risk on my account," said Viviana; "but be it as you will."

It was then agreed that they should not set out till nightfall, but proceed, as soon as it grew dark, to Lambeth, where Humphrey Chetham undertook to procure a boat for their conveyance across the river. The hour of departure at length arrived. Viviana, who

withdrawn to her own room, appeared in her travelling habit, and was about to set forth with her companions, when they were all startled by a sudden and loud knocking at the door.

"We are discovered," she cried. "Doctor Dee has found out our retreat."

"Fear nothing," rejoined Chetham, drawing his sword, while his example was imitated by Martin Heydooke; "they shall not capture you while I live." As he spoke, the knocking was repeated, and the door shaken so violently as to threaten to burst its fastenings.

"Extinguish the light," whispered Chetham, "and let Father Oldcorne conceal himself. We have nothing to fear."

"Where shall I fly?" cried Oldcorne, despairingly. "It will be impossible to raise the flag, and seek refuge in the vault."

"Fly to my room," cried Viviana. And finding he stood irresolute, as if paralysed with terror, she took his arm, and dragged him away. The next moment the door was burst open with a loud crash, and several armed men, with their swords drawn, followed by Topcliffe, and another middle-aged man, of slight stature, and rather under-sized, but richly dressed, and bearing all the marks of exalted rank, rushed into the room.

"You are my prisoner!" cried Topcliffe, rushing up to Chetham, who had planted himself, with Martin Heydooke, at the foot of the stairs. "I arrest you in the king's name."

"You are mistaken in your man, sir," cried Chetham, fiercely. "I have committed no offence. Lay a hand upon me at your peril!"

"How is this?" cried Topcliffe. "Humphrey Chetham here!"

"Ay," returned the young merchant; "you have fallen upon the wrong house."

"Not so, sir," replied Topcliffe. "I am satisfied from your presence that I am right. Where you are, Viviana Radcliffe is not far off. Throw down your arms. You can offer no resistance to my force, and your zeal will not benefit your friends, while it will place your own safety in jeopardy." But Chetham fiercely refused compliance, and after a few minutes' further parley the soldiers were about to attack him, when Viviana opened a door above, and slowly descended the stairs. At her appearance, the young merchant, seeing that further resistance would be useless, sheathed his sword, and she passed between him and Heydooke, and advanced towards the leaders of the band.

"What means this intrusion?" she asked.

"We are come in search of two Jesuit priests, whom we have obtained information are hidden here," replied Topcliffe, "as well as of certain other Papists, disaffected against the state, for whose apprehension I hold a warrant."

"You are welcome to search the house," replied Viviana; "but there is no one within it except those you see."

As she said this, Chetham, who gazed earnestly at her, caught her eye, and, from a scarcely perceptible glance, felt certain that the priest, through her agency, had effected his escape. But the soldiers had not waited for her permission to make the search. Rushing up-stairs, they examined the different chambers—there were two small rooms besides that occupied by Viviana—and found several of the priests' habillents; but though they examined every corner with the minutest

attention, sounded the walls, peered up the chimneys, underneath the bed, and into every place likely and unlikely, they could find no other traces of those they sought, and were compelled to return to their leader with tidings of their ill-success. Topcliffe, with another party, continued his scrutiny below, and, discovering the movable flag in the hearth, descended into the vault, where he made certain of discovering his prey. But no one was there; and, the powder and arms having been removed, he gained nothing by his investigations.

Meanwhile, his companion—and evidently from his garb, and the deference paid him, though he was addressed by no title which could lead to the absolute knowledge of his rank, his superior—seated himself, and put many questions in a courteous but authoritative tone to Viviana respecting her residence in this solitary abode—the names of her companions—where they were—and upon what scheme they were engaged. To none of these questions would she return an answer, and her interrogator, at last losing patience, said, “I hold it my duty to inform you that you will be carried before the council, and, if you continue thus obstinate, means will be taken—and those none of the gentlest—to extort the truth from you.”

“You may apply the torture to me,” replied Viviana, firmly, “but it will wrest nothing from me.”

“That remains to be seen,” replied the other; “I only trust you will not compel me to put my threat into execution.”

At this moment Topcliffe emerged from the vault, and the soldiers returned from their unsuccessful search above.

“They have escaped us now,” remarked Topcliffe to his superior; “but I will conceal a party of men on the premises, who will be certain to capture them on their return.” Viviana uttered an exclamation of irrepressible uneasiness, which did not escape her auditors.

“I am right, you see,” observed Topcliffe, significantly, to his companion.

“You are so,” replied the other. As this was said, Viviana hazarded a look at Humphrey Chetham, the meaning of which he was not slow to comprehend. He saw that she wished him to make an effort to escape, that he might warn her companions, and, regardless of the consequence, he prepared to obey her. While those around were engaged in a last fruitless search, he whispered his intentions to Martin Heydocke, and only awaited a favourable opportunity to put them in execution. It occurred sooner than he expected. Before quitting the premises, Topcliffe determined to visit the upper rooms himself, and he took several of the men with him.

Chetham would have made an attempt to liberate Viviana, but, feeling certain it would be unsuccessful, he preferred obeying her wishes to his own inclinations. Topcliffe gone, he suddenly drew his sword—for neither he nor Heydocke had been disarmed—and, rushing towards the door, struck down the man next it, and, followed by his servant, passed through it before he could be intercepted. They both then flew at a swift pace towards the marshy fields, and, owing to the darkness and unstable nature of the ground, speedily distanced their pursuers.

Hearing the disturbance below, and guessing its cause, Topcliffe immediately descended. But he was too late; and though he joined

the pursuit, he was baffled like his attendants. Half an hour afterwards he returned to the house with an angry and disappointed look.

"He has given us the slip," he observed to his superior, who appeared exceedingly provoked by the young merchant's flight; "but we will soon have him again."

After giving directions to his men how to conceal themselves, Topcliffe informed his companion that he was ready to attend him. Viviana, who had remained motionless and silent during the foregoing scene, was taken out of the house, and conducted towards the creek, in which lay a large wherry manned by four rowers. She was placed within it, and, as soon as his superior was seated, Topcliffe inquired,

"Where will your lordship go first?"

"To the Star Chamber," was the answer. At this reply, in spite of herself, Viviana could not repress a shudder.

"All is lost!" she mentally ejaculated.

CHAPTER VI.—THE CELLAR.

It was long before the conspirators gained sufficient courage to recommence digging the mine. Whenever holy water was thrown upon the stones, the mysterious bell ceased tolling, but it presently began anew, and such was the appalling effect of the sound that it completely paralysed the listeners. Prayers were said by Garnet; hymns sung by the others; but all was of no avail. It continued to toll on with increased solemnity, unless checked by the same potent application as before.

The effect became speedily manifest in the altered looks and demeanour of the conspirators, and it was evident that, if something was not done to arouse them, the enterprise would be abandoned. Catesby, equally superstitious with his confederates, but having nerves more firmly strung, was the first to conquer his terror. Crossing himself, he muttered a secret prayer, and, snatching up a pickaxe, entered the cavity, and resumed his labour. The noise of the heavy blows dealt by him against the wall drowned the tolling of the bell. The charm was broken; and, stimulated by his conduct, the others followed his example, and though the awful tolling continued at intervals during the whole of their operations, it offered no further interruption to them.

Another and more serious cause of anxiety, however, arose. As the work advanced, without being aware of it, they approached the bank of the river, and the water began to ooze through the sides of the excavation—at first slightly, but by degrees to such an extent as to convince them that their labour would be entirely thrown away. Large portions of the clay, loosened by the damp, fell in upon them, nearly burying those nearest the tumbling mass; and the floor was now in some places more than a foot deep in water, clearly proving it would be utterly impossible to keep the powder fit for use in such a spot. Catesby bore these untoward circumstances with ill-concealed mortification. For a time he struggled against them, and, though he felt *that it was hopeless*, worked on like a desperate military leader conducting a *forlorn hope* to certain destruction. At length, however, the *water began to make such incursions* that he could no longer disguise *from himself or his companions* that they were contending against in-

surmountable difficulties, and that to proceed further would be madness. He, therefore, with a heavy heart, desisted, and, throwing down his pickaxe, said, it was clear that Heaven did not approve their design, and that it must be relinquished.

"We ought to have been warned by that doleful bell," he observed, in conclusion. "I now perceive its meaning. And as I was the first to act in direct opposition to the declared will of the Supreme Being, so now I am the first to admit my error."

"I cannot account for that dread and mysterious sound, my son," replied Garnet, "and can only attribute it, as you do, to Divine interference. But whether it was intended as a warning or a guidance, I confess I am unable to say."

"Can you longer doubt, father," returned Catesby, bitterly, "when you look at yon excavation? It took us more than a week's incessant labour to get through the first wall; and our toil was no sooner lightened than these fatal consequences ensued. If we proceed, we shall drown ourselves, instead of blowing up our foes. And even if we should escape, were the powder stowed for one day in that damp place, it would never explode. We have failed, and must take measures accordingly."

"I entirely concur with you, my son," replied Garnet; "we must abandon our present plan. But do not let us be disheartened. Perhaps, at this very moment, Heaven is preparing for us a victory by some unlooked-for means."

"It may be so," replied Catesby, with a look of incredulity.

As he spoke, an extraordinary noise, like a shower of falling stones, was heard overhead. And coupling the sound with their fears of the encroachment of the damp, the conspirators glanced at each other in dismay, thinking the building was falling in upon them.

"All blessed saints protect us!" cried Garnet, as the sound ceased. "What was that?"

But no one was able to account for it, and each regarded his neighbour with apprehension. After a short interval of silence the sound was heard again. There was then another pause—and again the same rushing and inexplicable noise.

"What can it be?" cried Catesby. "I am so enfeebled by this underground life, that trifles alarm me. Are our enemies pulling down the structure over our heads?—or are they earthing us up like vermin?" he added, to Fawkes. "What is it?"

"I will go and see," replied the other.

"Do not expose yourself, my son," cried Garnet. "Let us abide the result here."

"No, father," replied Fawkes. "Having failed in our scheme, what befalls me is of little consequence. I will go. If I return not, you will understand what has happened."

Pausing for a moment to receive Garnet's benediction, he then strode away. Half an hour elapsed before Fawkes returned, and the interval appeared thrice its duration in the eyes of the conspirators. When he reappeared, a smile sat upon his countenance, and his looks instantly dispelled the alarm that had been previously felt.

"You bring us good news, my son?" cried Garnet.

"Excellent, father," replied Fawkes; "and you were right in sayin

that, at the very moment we were indulging in misgiving, Heaven was preparing for us a victory by unforeseen and mysterious means." Garnet raised his hands gratefully and reverentially upwards; and the other conspirators crowded round Fawkes to listen to his relation.

"The noise we heard," he said, "arose from a very simple circumstance; and when you hear it you will smile at your fears. But you will not smile at the result to which it has led. Exactly overhead, it appears, a cellar is situated belonging to a person named Bright, and the sound was occasioned by the removal of his coals, which he has been selling off."

"Is that all?" cried Catesby. "We are indeed grown childish, to be alarmed at such a cause."

"It appears slight now it is explained," observed Keyes, gravely; "but how were we to know whence it arose?"

"True," returned Fawkes; "and I will now show you how the hand of Heaven has been manifested in the matter. The noise which led me to this investigation, and which I regard as a signal from on high, brought me to a cellar I had never seen before, and knew not existed. *That cellar lies immediately beneath the House of Lords.*"

"Ah! I see!" exclaimed Catesby. "You think it would form a good depository for the powder."

"If it had been built for the express purpose, it could not be better," returned Fawkes. "It is commodious and dry, and in an out-of-the-way place, as you may judge, when we ourselves have never hitherto noticed it."

"But what is all this to us, if we cannot use it?" returned Catesby.

"We can use it," replied Fawkes. "It is ours."

There was a general exclamation of surprise.

"Finding, on inquiry, that Bright was about to quit the neighbourhood," continued Fawkes, "and did not require the place longer, I instantly proposed to take it from him, and, to create no suspicion, engaged it in Percy's name, stating that he wanted it for his own fuel."

"You have done admirably," cried Catesby, in a tone of exultation. "The success of the enterprise will now be entirely owing to you."

"Not to me, but to the Providence that directed me," replied Fawkes, solemnly.

"Right, my son," returned Garnet. "And let this teach us never to despair again." The next day, Percy having taken possession of the cellar, it was carefully examined, and proved, as Fawkes had stated, admirably adapted to their purpose. Their fears were now at an end, and they looked on the success of their project as certain. The mysterious bell no longer tolled, and their sole remaining task was to fill up the excavation so far as to prevent any damage from the wet.

This was soon done, and their next step was to transport the powder during the night to the cellar. Concealing the barrels as before with fagots and coals, they gave the place the appearance of a mere receptacle for lumber, by filling it with old hampers, boxes without lids, broken bottles, stone jars, and other rubbish. They now began to think of separating, and Fawkes expressed his intention of returning that night to the house at Lambeth. No intelligence had reached them of Viviana's captivity, and they supposed her still an inmate of the miserable dwelling with Father Oldcorne.

Fawkes had often thought of her, and with uneasiness, during his toilsome labours; but they had so much engrossed him that her image was banished almost as soon as it arose. Now that grand obstacle was surmounted, and nothing was wanting, however, except a favourable moment to strike the blow, he began to feel the greatest anxiety respecting her. Still he thought it prudent to postpone his return to a late hour, and it was not until near midnight that he and Catesby ventured to their boat. As he was about to descend the steps, he heard his name pronounced by some one at a little distance, and the next moment a man, whom he immediately recognised as Humphrey Chetham, rushed up to him.

"You here again!" cried Fawkes, angrily, and not unsuspiciously. "Do you play the spy upon me?"

"I have watched for you for the last ten nights," replied Chetham, hastily. "I knew not where you were; but I found your boat here, and I hoped you would not cross the water in any other."

"Why all this care?" demanded Fawkes. "Has aught happened?—Is Viviana safe?—Speak, man! do not keep me longer in suspense!"

"Alas!" rejoined Chetham, "she is a prisoner."

"A prisoner!" ejaculated Fawkes, in a hollow voice. "Then my forebodings were not without cause."

"How has this happened?" cried Catesby, who had listened to what was said in silent wonder.

Chetham then hastily related all that had taken place.

"I know not what has become of her," he said, in conclusion; "but I have heard that she was taken to the Star Chamber by the Earl of Salisbury—for he, it appears, was the companion of Topcliffe—and, refusing to answer the interrogations of the council, was conveyed to the Tower, and, I fear, subjected to the torture."

"Tortured!" exclaimed Fawkes, horror-stricken; "Viviana tortured! And I have brought her to this! Oh, God! Oh, God."

"It is indeed an agonising reflection," replied Humphrey Chetham, in a sombre tone, "and enough to drive you to despair. Her last wishes, expressed only in looks, for she did not dare to give utterance to them, were that I should warn you not to approach the house at Lambeth, your enemies being concealed within it. I have now fulfilled them. Farewell!" And he turned to depart.

"Stay!" cried Catesby, arresting him. "Where is Father Oldcorne?"

"I know not," replied Humphrey Chetham. "As I have told you, Viviana by some means contrived his escape. I have seen nothing of him." And, hurrying away, he was lost beneath the shadow of the wall.

"Is this a troubled dream, or dread reality?" cried Fawkes to Catesby.

"I fear it is too true," returned the other, in a voice of much emotion. "Poor Viviana!"

"Something must be done to set her free," cried Fawkes. "I will purchase her liberty by delivering up myself."

"Your oath—remember your oath!" rejoined Catesby. "You may destroy yourself, *but not your associates.*"

"*True—true,*" replied Fawkes, distractedly; "I do remember it. I am sold to perdition."

"Anger not Heaven by these idle lamentations—and at a time, too, when all is so prosperous," rejoined Catesby.

"What!" cried Fawkes, fiercely; "would you have me calm, when she who called me father, and was dear to me as a child, is taken from me by these remorseless butchers—subjected to their terrible examinations—plunged in a dismal dungeon—and stretched upon the rack—all for me—for me? I shall go mad if I think upon it!"

"You must *not* think upon it," returned Catesby,—“at least not here. We shall be observed. Let us return to the house; and perhaps—though I scarcely dare indulge the hope—some plan may be devised for her liberation.”

With this, he dragged Fawkes, who was almost frenzied with anguish, forcibly along, and they returned to the house. Nothing more was said that night. Catesby judged it prudent to let the first violence of his friend's emotion expend itself before he attempted to soothe him, and, when he communicated the sad event to Garnet, the latter strongly approved the plan. Garnet was greatly distressed at the intelligence, and his affliction was shared by the other conspirators. No fears were entertained by any of them that Viviana would reveal aught of the plot, but this circumstance only added to their regrets.

"I will stake my life for her constancy," said Catesby.

"And so will I," returned Garnet. "She will die a martyr for us."

He then proposed that they should pray for her deliverance. And all instantly assenting, they knelt down, while Garnet poured forth the most earnest supplications to the Virgin in her behalf. The next morning Guy Fawkes set forth, and ascertained that Humphrey Chetham's statement was correct, and that Viviana was indeed a prisoner in the Tower. He repaired thither, and tried to ascertain in what part of the fortress she was confined, in the hope of gaining admittance to her. But as he could obtain no information, and his inquiries excited suspicion, he was compelled to return without accomplishing his object.

Crossing Tower Hill on his way back, he turned to glance at the stern pile he had just quitted, and which was fraught with the most fearful interest to him, when he perceived Chetham issue from the Bulwark Gate. He would have made up to him; but the young merchant, who had evidently seen him, though he looked sedulously another way, set off in the direction of the river, and was quickly lost to view. Filled with the gloomiest thoughts, Guy Fawkes proceeded to Westminster, where he arrived without further adventure of any kind.

In the latter part of the same day, as the conspirators were conferring together, they were alarmed by a knocking at the outer gate; and sending Bates to reconnoitre, he instantly returned with the intelligence that it was Lord Mounteagle. At the mention of this name, Tresham, who was one of the party, turned pale as death, and trembled so violently, that he could scarcely support himself. Having been allowed to go forth on that day, the visit of Lord Mounteagle at this juncture, coupled with the agitation it occasioned him, seemed to proclaim him guilty of treachery for the second time.

"*You have betrayed us, villain!*" cried Catesby, drawing his dagger; *but you shall not escape. I will poniard you on the spot.*"

"As you hope for mercy, do not strike!" cried Tresham. "On my soul, I have not seen Lord Mounteagle, and know not, any more than yourselves, what brings him hither. Put it to the proof. Let him come in. Conceal yourselves, and you will hear what passes between us."

"Let it be so," interposed Fawkes. "I will step within this closet, the door of which shall remain ajar. From it I can watch him without being observed, and, if aught occurs to confirm our suspicions, he dies."

"Bates shall station himself in the passage, and stab him if he attempts to fly," added Catesby. "Your sword, sir."

"It is here," replied Tresham, delivering it to Catesby, who handed it to Bates. "Are you satisfied?"

"Is Lord Mounteagle alone?" inquired Catesby, without noticing the question.

"He appears to be so," replied Bates.

"Admit him, then," rejoined Catesby.

Entering the closet with Keyes, he was followed by Fawkes, who drew his dagger, and kept the door slightly ajar, while Garnet and the rest retired to other hiding-places. A few moments afterwards Bates returned with Lord Mounteagle, and, having ushered him into the room, took his station in the passage, as directed by Catesby. The room was very dark, the shutters being closed, and light only finding its way through the chinks in them; and it appeared totally so to Lord Mounteagle, who, groping his way, stumbled forward, and exclaimed, in accents of some alarm, "Where am I? Where is Mr. Tresham?"

"I am here," replied Tresham, advancing towards him. "How did your lordship find me out?" he added, after the customary salutations were exchanged.

"My servant saw you enter this house," replied Mounteagle, "and knowing I was anxious to see you, waited for some hours without, in the expectation of your coming forth. But as this did not occur, he mentioned the circumstance to me on his return, and I immediately came in quest of you. When I knocked at the gate, I scarcely knew what to think of the place, and began to fear you must have fallen into the hands of cut-throats; and now that I have gained admittance, my wonder—and I may add my uneasiness—is not diminished. Why do you hide yourself in this wretched place?"

"Be seated," replied Tresham, placing a chair for Lord Mounteagle, with its back to the closet, while he took one opposite him, and near a table, on which some papers were laid. "Your lordship may remember," he continued, scarcely knowing what answer to make to the question, "that I wrote to you some time ago, to say that a conspiracy was hatching among certain of our party against the state."

"I have reason to remember it," replied Mounteagle. "The letter was laid before the Earl of Salisbury, and inquiries instituted in consequence. But, owing to your disappearance, nothing could be elicited. What plot had you discovered?"

At this moment, Tresham, who kept his eye fixed on the closet, perceived the door noiselessly open, and behind it the figure of Guy Fawkes, with the dagger in his hand.

"I was misinformed as to the nature of the plot," he stammered.

"Was it against the king's life?" demanded Mounteagle.

"No," rejoined Tresham; "as far as I could learn, it was an insurrection."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Mounteagle, sceptically. "My information, then, differed from yours. Who were the parties you suspected?"

"As I *wrongfully* suspected them," replied Tresham, evasively, "your lordship must excuse my naming them."

"Was Catesby—or Winter—or Wright—or Rookwood—or Sir Everard Digby concerned in it?" demanded Mounteagle.

"Not one of them," answered Tresham.

"They are the persons I suspect," replied Mounteagle; "and they are suspected by the Earl of Salisbury. But you have not told me what you are doing in this strange habitation. Are you ferreting out a plot, or contriving one?"

"Both," replied Tresham.

"How?" cried Mounteagle.

"I am plotting for myself, and counterplotting the designs of others," replied Tresham, mysteriously.

"Is this place, then, the rendezvous of a band of conspirators?" asked Mounteagle, uneasily. Tresham nodded in the affirmative.

"Who are they?" continued Mounteagle. "There is no need of concealment with me." As this was said, Tresham raised his eyes, and saw that Guy Fawkes had stepped silently forward, and placed himself behind Mounteagle's chair. His hand grasped his dagger, and his gaze never moved from the object of his suspicion.

"Who are they?" repeated Mounteagle. "Is Guy Fawkes one of them?"

"Assuredly not," replied Tresham. "Why should you name him? I never mentioned him to your lordship."

"I think you did," replied Mounteagle. "But I am certain you spoke of Catesby."

And Tresham's regards involuntarily wandered to the closet, where he beheld the stern glance of the person alluded to fixed upon him.

"You have heard of Viviana Radcliffe's imprisonment, I suppose?" pursued Mounteagle, unconscious of what was passing.

"I have," replied Tresham.

"The Earl of Salisbury expected he would be able to wring all from her, but he has failed," observed Mounteagle.

"I am glad of it," replied Tresham.

"I thought you were disposed to serve him?" remarked Mounteagle.

"So I am," replied Tresham. "But, if secrets are to be revealed, I had rather be the bearer of them than any one else. I am sorry for Viviana."

"I could procure her liberation, if I chose," observed Mounteagle.

"Say you so?" cried Fawkes, clapping him on the shoulder; "then you stir not hence till you have procured it!"

CHAPTER VII.—THE STAR CHAMBER.

VIVIANA, as has already been intimated, after her capture at the house at Lambeth, was conveyed to the Star Chamber. Here she was detained until a late hour on the following day, when she underwent a long and rigorous examination by certain members of the privy council, who were summoned for that purpose by the Earl of Salis-

bury. Throughout this arduous trial she maintained the utmost composure, and never for a single moment lost her firmness. On all occasions her matchless beauty and dignity produced the strongest impression on the beholders; but on no occasion had they ever produced so strong an effect as the present. Her features were totally destitute of bloom, but their very paleness, contrasted as it was with her large dark eyes, which blazed with unwonted brilliancy, as well as with her jet-black hair, so far from detracting from her loveliness, appeared to add to it.

As she was brought before the council, who were seated round a table, and remained standing at a short distance from them, guarded by Topcliffe and two halberdiers, a murmur of admiration pervaded the group, nor was this feeling lessened as the examination proceeded. Once, when the Earl of Salisbury adverted to the unworthy position in which she, the daughter of the proud and loyal Sir William Radcliffe, had placed herself, a shade passed over her brow, and a slight convulsion agitated her frame. But the next moment she recovered herself, and said, "However circumstances may appear against me, and whatever opinion your lordships may entertain of my conduct, the king has not a more loyal subject than myself, nor have any of you made greater efforts to avert the danger by which he is threatened."

"Then you admit that his majesty is in danger?" cried the Earl of Salisbury, eagerly.

"I admit nothing," replied Viviana. "But I affirm that I am his true and loyal subject."

"You cannot expect us to believe your assertion," replied the earl, "unless you approve it by declaring all you know touching this conspiracy."

"I have already told you, my lord," she returned, "that my lips are sealed on that subject."

"You disclaim, then, all knowledge of a plot against the king's life, and against his government?" pursued Salisbury. Viviana shook her head.

"You refuse to give up the names of your companions, or to reveal their intentions?" continued the earl.

"I do," she answered, firmly.

"Your obstinacy will not save them," rejoined the earl, in a severe tone, and after a brief pause. "Their names and their atrocious designs are known to us."

"If such be the case," replied Viviana, "why interrogate me on the subject?"

"Because—but it is needless to give a reason for the course which justice requires me to pursue," returned the earl. "You are implicated in this plot, and nothing can save you from condign punishment but a frank and full confession."

"Nothing can save me, then, my lord," replied Viviana; "but Heaven knows I shall perish unjustly."

A consultation was then held by the lords of the council, who whispered together for a few minutes. Viviana regarded them anxiously, but suffered no expression of uneasiness to escape her. As they again turned towards her, she saw from their looks, some of which exhibited great commiseration for her, that they had come to a decisio

(she could not doubt what) respecting her fate. Her heart stopped beating, and she could scarcely support herself. Such, however, was the control she exercised over herself, that, though filled with terror, her demeanour remained unaltered. She was not long kept in suspense. Fixing his searching gaze upon her, the Earl of Salisbury observed, in a severe tone, "Viviana Radcliffe, I ask you for the last time whether you will avow the truth?" No answer was returned.

"I will not disguise from you," continued the earl, "that your youth, your beauty, your constancy, and, above all, your apparent innocence, have deeply interested me, as well as the other noble persons here assembled to interrogate you, and who would willingly save you from the sufferings you will necessarily undergo, from a mistaken fidelity to the heinous traitors with whom you are so unhappily leagued. I would give you time to reflect, did I think the delay would answer any good purpose. I would remind you that no oath of secrecy, however solemn, can be binding in an unrighteous cause. I would tell you that your first duty is to your prince and governor, and that it is as great a crime, as unpardonable in the eyes of God as of man, to withhold the revelation of a conspiracy against the state, should it come to your knowledge, as to conspire against it yourself. I would lay all this before you. I would show you the magnitude of your offence, the danger in which you stand, and the utter impossibility of screening your companions, who, ere long, will be confronted with you, did I think it would avail. But, as you continue obstinate, justice must take its course."

"I am prepared for the worst, my lord," replied Viviana, humbly. "I thank your lordships for your consideration; but I take you all to witness that I profess the utmost loyalty and devotion for my sovereign, and that, whatever may be my fate, those feelings will remain unchanged to the last."

"Your manner and your words are so sincere, that, were not your conduct at variance with them, they might convince us," returned the earl. "As it is, even if we could credit your innocence, we are bound to act as if you were guilty. You will be committed to the Tower till his majesty's pleasure is known. And I grieve to add, if you still continue obstinate, the severest measures will be resorted to to extract the truth from you."

As he concluded, he attached his signature to a warrant which was lying on the table before him, and traced a few lines to Sir William Waad, lieutenant of the Tower. This done, he handed the papers to Topcliffe, and, waving his hand, Viviana was removed to the chamber in which she had been previously confined, and where she was detained under a strict guard, until Topcliffe, who had left her, returned to say that all was in readiness, and, bidding her follow him, led the way to the river-side, where a wherry, manned by six rowers, was awaiting for them.

The night was profoundly dark, and, as none of the guard carried torches, their course was steered in perfect obscurity. But the rowers were too familiar with the river to require the guidance of light. Shooting the bridge in safety, and pausing only for a moment to give the signal of their approach to the sentinels on the ramparts, they assed swiftly under the low-browed arch of Traitor's Gate.

CHAPTER VIII.—THE GAOLER'S DAUGHTER.

As Viviana set foot on those fatal stairs which so many have trod, and none without feeling that they took their first step towards the scaffold, she involuntarily shrank backward. But it was now too late to retreat; and she surrendered her hand to Topcliffe, who assisted her up the steps. Half-a-dozen men-at-arms, with a like number of warders, bearing torches, were present; and as it was necessary that Topcliffe should deliver his warrant into Sir William Waad's own hands, he committed his prisoner to the warders, with instructions to them to take her to the guard-room near the By-ward Tower, while he proceeded to the lieutenant's lodgings.

It was the first time Viviana had beheld the terrible pile in which she was immured, though she was well acquainted with its history, and with the persecutions which many of the professors of her faith had endured within it during the recent reign of Elizabeth; and as the light of the torches flashed upon the grey walls of the Bloody Tower, and upon the adjoining ramparts, all the dreadful tales she had heard rushed to her recollection. But having recovered the first shock, the succeeding impressions were powerless in comparison, and she accompanied the warders to the guard-room without expressing any outward emotion. Here a seat was offered her, and, as the men considerably withdrew, she was able to pursue her reflections unmolested. They were sad enough, and it required all her firmness to support her.

When considering what was likely to befall her in consequence of her adherence to the fortunes of Fawkes and his companions, she had often pictured some dreadful situation like the present; but the reality far exceeded her worst anticipations. She had deemed herself equal to any emergency; but, as she thought upon the dark menaces of the Earl of Salisbury, she felt it would require greater fortitude than she had hitherto displayed to bear her through her trial. Nor were her meditations entirely confined to herself. While trembling for the perilous situation of Guy Fawkes, she reproached herself that she could not requite, even in thought, the passionate devotion of Humphrey Chetham.

"What matters it now," she thought, "that I cannot love him? I shall soon be nothing to him, or to any one: And yet I feel I have done him wrong, and that I should be happier if I *could* requite his attachment. But the die is cast. It is too late to repent or to retreat. My heart acquits me of having been influenced by any unworthy motive, and I will strive to endure the keenest pang without a murmur."

Shortly after this, Topcliffe returned with Sir William Waad. On their entrance Viviana arose, and the lieutenant eyed her with some curiosity. He was a middle-aged man; tall, stoutly built, and having harsh features, stamped with an expression of mingled cunning and ferocity. His eyes had a fierce and bloodthirsty look, and were overshadowed by thick and scowling brows. Saluting the captive with affected courtesy, he observed,

"So you refuse to answer the interrogations of the privy council madam, I understand? I am not sorry for it, because I would have th

merit of wringing the truth from you. Those who have been most stubborn outside these walls have been the most yielding within them."

"That will not be my case," replied Viviana, coldly.

"We shall see," returned the lieutenant, with a significant glance at Topcliffe.

Ordering her to follow him, he then proceeded along the ward in the direction of the Bloody Tower, and, passing beneath its arched gateway, ascended the steps on the left, and led her to his lodgings. Entering the habitation, he mounted to the upper story, and, tracking a long gallery, brought her to a small circular chamber in the Bell Tower. Its sole furniture were a chair, a table, and a couch.

"Here you will remain for the present," observed the lieutenant, smiling grimly, and placing a lamp on the table. "It will depend upon yourself whether your accommodations are better hereafter." With this he quitted the cell with his attendants, and barred the door outside. Left alone, Viviana, who had hitherto restrained her anguish, suffered it to find vent in tears. Never had she felt so utterly forlorn and desolate. All before her was threatening and terrible, full of dangers, real and imaginary; nor could she look back upon her past career without something like remorse.

"Oh, that Heaven would take me to itself!" she murmured, clasping her hands in an agony of distress, "for I feel unequal to my trials. Oh, that I had perished with my dear father! For what dreadful fate am I reserved?—Torture!—I will bear it, if I *can*. But death by the hands of the public executioner—it is too horrible to think of! Is there no way to escape *that*?"

As this hideous thought occurred to her, she uttered a loud and prolonged scream, and fell senseless on the floor. When she recovered it was daylight; and, weak and exhausted, she crept to the couch, and, throwing herself upon it, endeavoured to forget her misery in sleep. But, as is usually the case with the afflicted, it fled her eyelids, and she passed several hours in the severest mental torture, unrelieved by a single cheering thought.

About the middle of the day the door of the cell was opened by an old woman with a morose and forbidding countenance, attended by a younger female, who resembled her in all but the expression of her features (her look was gentle and compassionate), and who appeared to be her daughter. Without paying any attention to Viviana, the old woman took a small loaf of bread and other provisions from a basket she had brought with her, and placed them on the table. This done, she was about to depart, when her daughter, who had glanced uneasily at the couch, observed, in a kindly tone,

"Shall we not inquire whether we can be of service to the poor young lady, mother?"

"Why should we concern ourselves about her, Ruth?" returned the old woman, sharply. "If she wants anything, she has a tongue, and can speak. If she desires further comforts," she added, in a significant tone, "*they must be paid for.*"

"*I desire nothing but death,*" groaned Viviana.

"*The poor soul is dying, I believe,*" cried Ruth, rushing to the couch. "*Have you no cordial-water about you, mother?*"

"Truly have I," returned the old woman; "and I have other things besides. But I must be paid for them."

As she spoke, she drew from her pocket a small, square, Dutch-shaped bottle.

"Give it me," cried Ruth, snatching it from her. "I am sure the young lady will pay for it."

"You are very kind," said Viviana, faintly. "But I have no means of doing so."

"I knew it," cried the old woman, fiercely. "I knew it. Give me back the flask, Ruth; she shall not taste a drop. Do you not hear she has no money, wench? Give it me, I say."

"Nay, mother; for pity's sake," implored Ruth.

"Pity, forsooth!" exclaimed the old woman, derisively. "If I, and thy father, Jasper Ipgreve, had any such feeling, it would be high time for him to give up his post of gaoler in the Tower of London. Pity for a *poor* prisoner! Thou, a gaoler's daughter, and talk so! I am ashamed of thee, wench. But I thought this was a rich Catholic heiress, and had powerful and wealthy friends."

"So she is," replied Ruth; "and though she may have no money with her now, she can command any amount she pleases. I heard Master Topcliffe tell young Nicholas Hardesty, the warder, so. She is the daughter of the late Sir William Radcliffe, of Ordsall Hall, in Lancashire, and sole heiress of his vast estates."

"Is this so, sweet lady?" inquired the old woman, stepping towards the couch. "Are you truly Sir William Radcliffe's daughter?"

"I am," replied Viviana. "But I have said I require nothing from you. Leave me."

"No—no, dear young lady," rejoined Dame Ipgreve, in a whining tone, which was infinitely more disagreeable to Viviana than her previous harshness: "I cannot leave you in this state. Raise her head, Ruth, while I pour a few drops of the cordial down her throat."

"I will not taste it," replied Viviana, putting the flask aside.

"You would find it a sovereign restorative," replied Dame Ipgreve, with a mortified look; "but as you please. I will not urge you against your inclination. The provisions I have been obliged to bring you are too coarse for a daintily-nurtured maiden like you—but you shall have others presently."

"It is needless," rejoined Viviana. "Pray leave me."

"Well, well, I am going," rejoined Dame Ipgreve, hesitating. "Do you want to write to any one? I can find means of conveying a letter secretly out of the Tower."

"Ah!" exclaimed Viviana, raising herself. "And yet no—no—I dare not trust you."

"You may," replied the avaricious old woman—"provided you pay me well."

"I will think of it," returned Viviana. "But I have not strength to write now."

"You must not give way thus—indeed you must not, dear lady," said Ruth, in a voice of great kindness. "It will not be safe to leave you. Suffer me to remain with you."

"Willingly," replied Viviana; "most willingly."

"Stay with her, then, child," said Dame Ipgreve. "I will go and

prepare a nourishing broth for her. Take heed and make a shrewd bargain with her for thy attendance," she added, in a hasty whisper, as she retired.

Greatly relieved by the old woman's departure, Viviana turned to Ruth, and thanked her in the warmest terms for her kindness. A few minutes sufficed to convert the sympathy which these two young persons evidently felt towards each other into affectionate regard, and the gaoler's daughter assured Viviana that so long as she should be detained she would devote herself to her. By this time the old woman had returned with a mess of hot broth, which she carried with an air of great mystery beneath her cloak. Viviana was prevailed upon by the solicitations of Ruth to taste it, and found herself much revived in consequence. Her slight meal ended, Dame Ipgreve departed, with a promise to return in the evening with such viands as she could manage to introduce unobserved, and with a flask of wine.

"You will need it, sweet lady, I fear," she said, "for my husband tells me you are in peril of the torture. Oh! it is a sad thing that such as you should be so cruelly dealt with! But we will take all the care of you we can. You will not forget to requite us. You must give me an order on your steward, or on some rich Catholic friend. I am half a Papist myself—that is, I like one religion as well as the other—and I like those best, whatever their creed may be, who pay best. That is my maxim, and it is the same with my husband. We do all we can to scrape together a penny for our child."

"No more of this, good mother," interrupted Ruth. "It distresses the lady. I will take care she wants nothing."

"Right, child, right," returned Dame Ipgreve. "Do not forget what I told you," she added, in a whisper. And she quitted the cell.

Ruth remained with Viviana during the rest of the day, and it was a great consolation to the latter to find that her companion was of the same faith as herself, having been converted by Father Poole, a Romish priest, who was confined in the Tower during the latter part of Elizabeth's reign, and whose sufferings and constancy for his religion had made a powerful impression on the gaoler's daughter. As soon as Viviana ascertained this, she made Ruth, so far as she thought prudent, a confidant in her misfortunes, and, after beguiling some hours in conversation, they both knelt down and offered up fervent prayers to the Virgin. Ruth then departed, promising to return in the evening with her mother. Soon after it became dark Dame Ipgreve and her daughter reappeared, the former carrying a lamp, and the latter a basket of provisions. Ruth's countenance was so troubled that Viviana was certain that some fresh calamity was at hand.

"What is the matter?" she hastily demanded.

"Make your meal first, dear young lady," replied Dame Ipgreve. "Our news might take away your appetite, and you will have to pay for your supper, whether you eat it or not."

"You alarm me greatly," cried Viviana, anxiously. "What ill news do you bring?"

"I will not keep you longer in suspense, madam," said Ruth. "You are to be examined to-night by the lieutenant and certain members of the privy council, and, if you refuse to answer their questions, I lament to say you will be put to the torture."

"Heaven give me strength to endure it!" ejaculated Viviana, in a despairing tone.

"Eat, madam, eat," cried Dame Ipgreve, pressing the viands upon her. "You will never be able to go through with the examination, if you starve yourself in this way."

"Are you sure," inquired Viviana, appealing to Ruth, "that it will take place so soon?"

"Quite sure," replied Ruth. "My father has orders to attend the lieutenant at midnight."

"Let me advise you to conceal nothing," insinuated the old woman. "They are determined to wring the truth from you—and they will do so."

"You are mistaken, good woman," replied Viviana, firmly. "I will die before I utter a word."

"You think so now," returned Dame Ipgreve, maliciously; "but the sight of the rack and the thumbscrews will alter your tone. At all events, support nature."

"No," replied Viviana; "as I do not desire to live, I will use no effort to sustain myself. They may kill me if they please."

"Misfortune has turned her brain," muttered the old woman. "I must take care and secure my dues. Well, madam, if you will not eat the supper I have provided, it cannot be helped. I must find some one who will. You must pay for it all the same. My husband, Jasper Ipgreve, will be present at your interrogation, and I am sure, for my sake, he will use you as lightly as he can. Come, Ruth, you must not remain here longer."

"Oh, let her stay with me," implored Viviana. "I will make it well worth your while to grant me the indulgence."

"What will you give?" cried the old woman, eagerly. "But no—no—I dare not leave her. The lieutenant may visit you, and find her, and then I should lose my place. Come along, Ruth. She shall attend you after the interrogation, madam. I shall be there myself."

"Farewell, madam," sobbed Ruth, who was almost drowned in tears. "Heaven grant you constancy to endure your trial!"

"Be ruled by me," said the old woman. "Speak out, and secure your own safety."

She would have continued in the same strain, but Ruth dragged her away, and, casting a commiserating glance at Viviana, she closed the door. The dreadful interval between their departure and midnight was passed by Viviana in fervent prayer. As she heard through the barred embrasure of her dungeon the deep strokes of the clock toll out the hour of twelve, the door opened, and a tall, gaunt personage, habited in a suit of rusty black, and with a large bunch of keys at his girdle, entered the cell.

"You are Jasper Ipgreve?" said Viviana, rising.

"Right," replied the gaoler. "I am come to take you before the lieutenant and the council. Are you ready?"

Viviana replied in the affirmative, and Ipgreve, quitting the cell, outside which two other officials in sable habiliments were stationed, led the way down a short spiral staircase, which brought them to a narrow vaulted passage. Pursuing it for some time, the gaoler halted before a strong door, cased with iron, and, opening it, admitted the captive into

a square chamber, the roof of which was supported by a heavy stone pillar, while its walls were garnished with implements of torture. At a table on the left sat the lieutenant and three other grave-looking personages. Across the lower end of the chamber a thick black curtain was stretched, hiding a deep recess; and behind it, as was evident from the glimmer that escaped from its folds, there was a light. Certain indistinct but ominous sounds, issuing from the recess, proved that there were persons within it, and Viviana's quaking heart told her what was the nature of their proceedings.

She had ample time to survey this dismal apartment and its occupants, for several minutes elapsed before a word was addressed to her by her interrogators, who continued to confer together in an under tone, as if unconscious of her presence. During this pause, broken only by the ominous sounds before mentioned, Viviana scanned the countenances of the group at the table, in the hope of discerning in them some glimpses of compassion; but they were inscrutable and inexorable, and scarcely less dreadful to look upon than the hideous implements on the walls.

Viviana wished the earth would open and swallow her, that she might escape from them. Anything was better than to be left at the mercy of such men. At certain times, and not unfrequently at the most awful moments, a double current of thought will flow through the brain, and at this frightful juncture it was so with Viviana. While shuddering at all she saw around her, nay, dwelling upon it, another and distinct train of thought led her back to former scenes of happiness, when she was undisturbed by any but remote apprehensions of danger. She thought of her tranquil residence at Ordsall—of the flowers she had tended in the garden—of her father, and of his affection for her—of Humphrey Chetham, and of her early and scarce-acknowledged attachment to him—and of his generosity and devotion, and how she had requited it. And then, like a sullen cloud darkening the fair prospect, arose the figure of Guy Fawkes—the sombre enthusiast—who had unwittingly exercised such a baneful influence upon her fortunes.

"Had he not crossed my path," she mentally ejaculated, "I might have been happy—might have loved Humphrey Chetham—might, perhaps, have wedded him!"

These reflections were suddenly dispersed by the lieutenant, who, in a stern tone, commenced his interrogations. As upon her previous examination, Viviana observed the utmost caution, and either refused to speak, or answered such questions only as affected herself. At first, in spite of all her efforts, she trembled violently, and her tongue clove to the roof of her mouth. But after a while she recovered her courage, and regarded the lieutenant with a look as determined as his own.

"It is useless to urge me further," she concluded. "I have said all I will say."

"Is it your pleasure, my lords," observed Sir William Waad to the others, "to prolong the examination?"

His companions replied in the negative, and the one nearest him remarked, "Is she aware what will follow?"

"I am," replied Viviana, resolutely; "and I am not to be intimidated."

Sir William Waad then made a sign to Ipgreve, who immediately stepped forward and seized her arm. "You will be taken to that recess," said the lieutenant, "where the question will be put to you. But as we shall remain here, you have only to utter a cry if you are willing to avow the truth, and the torture shall be stayed. And it is our merciful hope that this may be the case."

Summoning up all her resolution, and walking with a firm footstep, Viviana passed with Ipgreve behind the curtain. She there beheld two men and a woman—the latter was the gaoler's wife, who instantly advanced to her, and besought her to confess.

"There is no help for it, if you refuse," she urged; "not all your wealth can save you."

"Mind your own business, dame," interposed Ipgreve, angrily, "and assist her to unrobe." Saying this, he stepped aside with the two men, one of whom was the surgeon, and the other the tormentor, while Dame Ipgreve helped to take off Viviana's gown. She then tied a scarf over her shoulders, and informed her husband she was ready.

The recess was about twelve feet high and ten wide. It was crossed near the roof, which was arched and vaulted, by a heavy beam, with pulleys and ropes at either extremity. But what chiefly attracted the unfortunate captive's attention was a couple of iron gauntlets attached to it, about a yard apart. Upon the ground under the beam, and immediately beneath that part of it where the gauntlets were fixed, were laid three pieces of wood of a few inches in thickness, and piled upon one another.

"What must I do?" inquired Viviana, in a hollow voice, but with unaltered resolution, of the old woman.

"Step upon those pieces of wood," replied Dame Ipgreve, leading her towards them. Viviana obeyed, and, as soon as she had set foot upon the pile, the tormentor placed a joint-stool beside her, and, mounting it, desired her to place her right hand in one of the gauntlets. She did so, and the tormentor then turned a screw, which compressed the iron glove so tightly as to give her excruciating pain. He then got down, and Ipgreve demanded if he should proceed.

A short pause ensued, but, notwithstanding her agony, Viviana made no answer. The tormentor then placed the stool on the left side, and fastened the hand which was still at liberty within the other gauntlet. The torture was dreadful, and the fingers appeared crushed by the pressure. Still Viviana uttered no cry. After another short pause, Ipgreve said, "You had better let us stop here. This is mere child's play compared with what is to come."

No answer being returned, the tormentor took a mallet and struck one of the pieces of wood from under Viviana's feet. The shock was dreadful, and seemed to dislocate her wrists, while the pressure on the hands was increased in a tenfold degree. The poor sufferer, who was resting on the points of her feet, felt that the removal of the next piece of wood would occasion almost intolerable torture. Her constancy, however, did not desert her, and, after the question had been repeated by Ipgreve, the second block was struck away. She was now suspended by her hands, and the pain was so exquisite, that nature gave way, and, uttering a piercing scream, she fainted.

On recovering, she found herself stretched upon a miserable pallet

with Ruth watching beside her. A glance round the chamber, which was of solid stone masonry, with a deep embrasure on one side, convinced her that she had been removed to some other prison.

"Where am I?" she asked, in a faint voice.

"In the Well Tower, madam," replied Ruth; "one of the fortifications near the moat, and now used as a prison-lodging. My father dwells within it, and you are under his custody."

"Your father!" cried Viviana, shuddering as she recalled the sufferings she had recently undergone. "Will he torture me again?"

"Not if I can prevent it, dear lady," replied Ruth. "But hush! here comes my mother. Not a word before her."

As Ruth spoke, Dame Ipgreve, who had been lingering at the door, entered the room. She affected the greatest solicitude for Viviana,—felt her pulse,—looked at the bandages fastened round her swollen and crippled fingers,—and concluded by counselling her not to persist in refusing to speak.

"I dare not tell you what tortures are in store for you," she said, "if you continue thus obstinate. But they will be a thousand times worse than what you endured last night."

"When will my next interrogation take place?" inquired Viviana.

"A week hence, it may be—or it may be sooner," returned the old woman. "It depends upon the state you are in—and somewhat upon the fees you give my husband, for he has a voice with the lieutenant."

"I would give him all I possess, if he could save me from further torture," cried Viviana.

"Alas! alas!" replied Dame Ipgreve, "you ask more than can be done. He would save you if he could; but you will not let him. However, we will do all we can to mitigate your sufferings—all we can, provided you pay us. Stay with her child," she added, with a significant gesture to her daughter, as she quitted the room,—*"stay with her."*

"My heart bleeds for you, madam," said Ruth, in accents of the deepest commiseration, as soon as they were alone. "You may depend upon my fidelity. If I can contrive your escape, I will—at any risk to myself."

"On no account," replied Viviana. "Do not concern yourself about me more. My earthly sufferings, I feel, will have terminated before further cruelty can be practised upon me."

"Oh! say not so, madam," returned Ruth. "I hope—nay, I am sure—you will live long and happily."

Viviana shook her head, and Ruth, finding her very feeble, thought it better not to continue the conversation. She accordingly applied such restoratives as were at hand, and, observing that the eyes of the sufferer closed as if in slumber, glided noiselessly out of the chamber, and left her.

In this way a week passed. At the expiration of that time the chirurgeon pronounced her in so precarious a state, that, if the torture were repeated, he would not answer for her life. The interrogation, therefore, was postponed for a few days, during which the chirurgeon *constantly visited her, and by his care and the restoratives she was compelled to take, she rapidly regained her strength.* One day, after *he chirurgeon had departed,* Ruth cautiously closed the door, and *observed to her,*

"You are now so far recovered, madam, as to be able to make an attempt to escape. I have devised a plan, which I will communicate to you to-morrow. It must not be delayed, or you will have to encounter a second and more dreadful examination."

"I will not attempt it if you are exposed to risk," replied Viviana.

"Heed me not," returned Ruth. "One of your friends has found out your place of confinement, and has spoken to me about you."

"What friend?" exclaimed Viviana, starting. "Guy Fawkes?—I mean——" And she hesitated, while her pale cheeks were suffused with blushes.

"He is named Humphrey Chetham," returned Ruth. "Like myself, he would risk his life to preserve you."

"Tell him he must not do so," cried Viviana, eagerly. "He has done enough—too much for me, already. I will not expose him to further hazard. Tell him so, and entreat him to abandon the attempt."

"But I shall not see him, dear lady," replied Ruth. "Besides, if I read him rightly, he is not likely to be turned aside by any selfish consideration."

"You are right, he is not," groaned Viviana. "But this only adds to my affliction. Oh! if you *should* see him, dear Ruth, try to dissuade him from his purpose."

"I will obey you, madam," replied the gaoler's daughter. "But I am well assured it will be of no avail."

After some further conversation, Ruth retired, and Viviana was left alone for the night. Except the slumber procured by soporific potions, she had known no repose since she had been confined within the Tower; and this night she felt more than usually restless. After ineffectually endeavouring to compose herself, she arose, and, hastily robing herself—a task she performed with no little difficulty, her fingers being almost useless—continued to pace her narrow chamber.

It has been mentioned that on one side of the cell there was a deep embrasure. It was terminated by a narrow and strongly grated loophole, looking upon the moat. Pausing before it, Viviana gazed forth. The night was pitchy dark, and not even a solitary star could be discerned; but as she had no light in her chamber, the gloom outside was less profound than that within.

While standing thus, buried in thought, and longing for daybreak, Viviana fancied she heard a slight sound as of some one swimming across the moat. Thinking she might be deceived, she listened more intently, and, as the sound continued, she felt sure she was right in her conjecture. All at once the thought of Humphrey Chetham flashed upon her, and she had no doubt it must be him. Nor was she wrong. The next moment a noise was heard as of some one clambering up the wall; a hand grasped the bars of the loophole, which was only two or three feet above the level of the water; and a low voice, which she instantly recognised, pronounced her name.

"Is it Humphrey Chetham?" she asked, advancing as near as she could to the loophole.

"It is," was the reply. "Do not despair. I will accomplish your liberation. I have passed three days within the Tower, and only ascertained your place of confinement a few hours ago. I have con-

trived a plan for your escape with the gaoler's daughter, which she will make known to you to-morrow."

"I cannot thank you sufficiently for your devotion," replied Viviana, in accents of the deepest gratitude. "But I implore you to leave me to my fate. I am wretched enough now, Heaven knows! but if aught should happen to you, I shall be infinitely more so. If I possess any power over you—and that I do so I well know—I entreat, nay, I command you to desist from this attempt."

"I have never yet disobeyed you, Viviana," replied the young merchant, passionately—"nor will I do so now. But if you bid me abandon you, I will plunge into this moat, never to rise again."

His manner, notwithstanding the low tone in which he spoke, was so determined, that Viviana felt certain he would carry his threat into execution; she therefore rejoined in a mournful tone,

"Well, be it as you will. It is in vain to resist our fate. I am destined to bring misfortune to you."

"Not so," replied Chetham. "If I *can* save you, I would rather die than live. The gaoler's daughter will explain her plan to you to-morrow. Promise me to accede to it." Viviana reluctantly assented. "I shall quit the Tower at daybreak," pursued Chetham; "and when you are once out of it, hasten to the stairs beyond the wharf at Petty Wales. I will be there with a boat. Farewell!"

As he spoke, he let himself drop into the water, but, his foot slipping, the plunge was louder than he intended, and attracted the attention of a sentinel on the ramparts, who immediately called out to know what was the matter, and, not receiving any answer, discharged his caliver in the direction of the sound. Viviana, who heard the challenge and the shot, uttered a loud scream, and the next moment Ipgreve and his wife appeared. The gaoler glanced suspiciously round the room; but after satisfying himself that all was right, and putting some questions to the captive which she refused to answer, he departed with his wife, and carefully barred the door.

It is impossible to imagine greater misery than Viviana endured the whole of the night. The uncertainty in which she was kept as to Chetham's fate was almost insupportable, and the bodily pain she had recently endured appeared light when compared with her present mental torture. Day at length dawned; but it brought with it no Ruth. Instead of this faithful friend, Dame Ipgreve entered the chamber with the morning meal, and her looks were so morose and distrustful that Viviana feared she must have discovered her daughter's design. She did not, however, venture to make a remark, but suffered the old woman to depart in silence.

Giving up all for lost, and concluding that Humphrey Chetham had either perished, or was, like herself, a prisoner, Viviana bitterly bewailed his fate, and reproached herself with being unintentionally the cause of it. Later in the day Ruth entered the cell. To Viviana's eager inquiries she replied that Humphrey Chetham had escaped. Owing to the darkness, the sentinel had missed his aim, and although the most rigorous search was instituted throughout the fortress, he had contrived to elude observation.

"Our attempt," pursued Ruth, "must be made this evening. The lieutenant has informed my father that you are to be interrogated at

midnight, the surgeon having declared that you are sufficiently recovered to undergo the torture (if needful) a second time. Now listen to me. The occurrence of last night has made my mother suspicious, and she watches my proceedings with a jealous eye. She is at this moment with a female prisoner in the Beauchamp Tower, or I should not be able to visit you. She has consented, however, to let me bring in your supper. You must then change dresses with me. Being about my height, you may easily pass for me, and I will take care there is no light below, so that your features will not be distinguished."

Viviana would have checked her, but the other would not be interrupted.

"As soon as you are ready," she continued, "you must lock the door upon me. You must then descend the short flight of steps before you, and pass as quickly as you can through the room where you will see my father and mother. As soon as you are out of the door, turn to the left, and go straight forward to the By-ward Tower. Show this pass to the warders. It is made out in my name, and they will suffer you to go forth. Do the same with the warders at the next gate—the Middle Tower—and again at the Bulwark Gate. That passed, you are free."

"And what will become of you?" asked Viviana, with a bewildered look.

"Never mind me," rejoined Ruth; "I shall be sufficiently rewarded if I save you. And now, farewell. Be ready at the time appointed."

"I cannot consent," returned Viviana.

"You have no choice," replied Ruth, breaking from her, and hurrying out of the room.

Time, as it ever does, when expectation is on the rack, appeared to pass with unusual slowness. But as the hour at length drew near, Viviana wished it further off. It was with the utmost trepidation that she heard the key turn in the lock, and beheld Ruth enter the cell with the evening meal.

Closing the door, and setting down the provisions, the gaoler's daughter hastily divested herself of her dress, which was of brown serge, as well as of her coif and kerchief, while Viviana imitated her example. Without pausing to attire herself in the other's garments, Ruth then assisted Viviana to put on the dress she had just laid aside, and arranged her hair and the head-gear so skilfully that the disguise was complete.

Hastily whispering some further instructions to her, and explaining certain peculiarities in her gait and deportment, she then pressed her to her bosom, and led her to the door. Viviana would have remonstrated, but Ruth pushed her through it and closed it.

There was now no help, so Viviana, though with great pain to herself, contrived to turn the key in the lock. Descending the steps, she found herself in a small circular chamber, in which Ipgreve and his wife were seated at a table, discussing their evening meal. The sole light was afforded by a few dying embers on the hearth.

"What! has she done already?" demanded the old woman, as Viviana appeared. "*Why hast thou not brought the jelly with thee, if she has not eaten it all, and those cakes, which Master Pilchard, the surgeon, ordered her? Go and fetch them directly. They w*

finish our repast daintily; and there are other matters too, which I dare say she has not touched. She will pay for them, and that will make them the sweeter. Go back, I say. What dost thou stand there for, as if thou wert thunderstruck? Dost hear me or not?"

"Let the wench alone, dame," growled Ipgreve. "You frighten her."

"So I mean to do," replied the old woman; "she deserves to be frightened. Hark thee, girl, we must get an order from her on some wealthy Catholic family without delay, for I don't think she will stand the trial to-night."

"Nor I," added Ipgreve, "especially as she is to be placed on the rack."

"She has a chain of gold round her throat I have observed," said the old woman; "we must get that."

"I have it," said Viviana, in a low tone, and imitating, as well as she could, the accents of Ruth. "Here it is."

"Did she give it thee?" cried the old woman, getting up, and grasping Viviana's lacerated fingers with such force, that she had difficulty in repressing a scream. "Did she give it thee, I say?"

"She gave it me for you," gasped Viviana. "Take it."

While the old woman held the chain to the fire, and called to her husband to light a lamp, that she might feast her greedy eyes upon it, Viviana flew to the door.

Just as she reached it, the shrill voice of Dame Ipgreve arrested her.

"Come back!" cried the dame. "Whither art thou going at this time of night? I will not have thee stir forth. Come back, I say."

"Pshaw! let her go," interposed Ipgreve. "I dare say she hath an appointment on the Green with young Nicholas Hardesty, the warder. Go, wench. Be careful of thyself, and return within the hour."

"If she does not, she will rue it," added the dame. "Go, then, and I will see the prisoner."

Viviana required no further permission. Starting off, as she had been directed, on the left, she ran as fast as her feet could carry her; and, passing between two arched gateways, soon reached the By-ward Tower. Showing the pass to the warder, he chucked her under the chin, and, drawing an immense bolt, opened the wicket, and gallantly helped her to pass through it. The like good success attended her at the Middle Tower and at the Bulwark Gate. Scarcely able to credit her senses, and doubting whether she was indeed free, she hurried on till she came to the opening leading to the stairs at Petty Wales. As she hesitated, uncertain what to do, a man advanced towards and addressed her by name. It was Humphrey Chetham. Overcome by emotion, Viviana sank into his arms, and in another moment she was placed in a wherry, which was ordered to be rowed towards Westminster.

CHAPTER IX.—THE COUNTERPLOT.

STARTLED, but not dismayed—for he was a man of great courage—by the sudden address and appearance of Guy Fawkes, Lord Mounteagle instantly sprang to his feet, and, drawing his sword, put himself into a posture of defence.

"You have betrayed me," he cried, seizing Tresham with his left hand; "but if I fall, you shall fall with me."

"You have betrayed yourself, my lord," rejoined Guy Fawkes; "or, rather, Heaven has placed you in our hands as an instrument for the liberation of Viviana Radcliffe. You must take an oath of secrecy—a binding oath—such as, being a good Catholic, you cannot break—not to divulge what has come to your knowledge. Nay, you must join me and my confederates, or you quit not this spot with life."

"I refuse your terms," replied Mounteagle, resolutely. "I will never conspire against the monarch to whom I have sworn allegiance. I will not join you. I will not aid you in procuring Viviana Radcliffe's release. Nor will I take the oath you propose. On the contrary, I arrest you as a traitor, and I command you, Tresham, in the king's name, to assist me in his capture."

But suddenly extricating himself from the grasp imposed upon him, and placing Guy Fawkes between him and the earl, Tresham rejoined, "It is time to throw off the mask, my good lord and brother. I can render you no assistance. I am sworn to this league, and must support it. Unless you assent to the conditions proposed—and which for your own sake I would counsel you to do—I must, despite our near relationship, take part against you,—even," he added, significantly, "if your destruction should be resolved upon."

"I will sell my life dearly, as you shall find," replied Mounteagle. "And but for the sake of my dear lady, your sister, I would stab you where you stand."

"Your lordship will find resistance in vain," replied Guy Fawkes, keeping his eye steadily fixed upon him. "We seek not your life, but your co-operation. You are a prisoner."

"A prisoner!" echoed Mounteagle, derisively. "You have not secured me yet."

And as he spoke he rushed towards the door, but his departure was checked by Bates, who presented himself at the entrance of the passage with a drawn sword in his hand. At the same moment Catesby and Keyes issued from the closet, while Garnet and the other conspirators likewise emerged from their hiding-places. Hearing the noise behind him, Lord Mounteagle turned, and, beholding the group, uttered an exclamation of surprise and rage.

"I am fairly entrapped," he said, sheathing his sword, and advancing towards them. "Fool that I was to venture hither!"

"These regrets are too late, my lord," replied Catesby. "You came hither of your own accord; but being here, nothing, except compliance with our demands, can ensure your departure."

"Yes, one thing else," thought Mounteagle—"cunning. It shall go hard if I cannot outwit you. Tresham will act with me. I know his treacherous nature too well to doubt which way he will incline. Interest, as well as relationship, binds him to me. He will acquaint me with their plans. I need not, therefore, compromise myself by joining them. If I take the oath of secrecy, it will suffice—and I will find means of eluding the obligation. I may thus make my own bargain with Salisbury. But I must proceed cautiously; too sudden a compliance might awaken their suspicions."

"My lord," said Catesby, who had watched his countenance nar-

and distrusted its expression, "we must have no double dealing. Any attempt to play us false will prove fatal to you."

"I have not yet consented to your terms, Mr. Catesby," returned Mounteagle, "and I demand a few moments' reflection before I do so."

"What say you, gentlemen?" said Catesby. "Do you agree to his lordship's request?"

There was a general answer in the affirmative.

"I would also confer for a moment alone with my brother Tresham," said Mounteagle.

"That cannot be, my lord," rejoined Garnet, peremptorily. "And take heed you meditate no treachery towards us, or you will destroy yourself here and hereafter."

"I have no desire to speak with him, father," observed Tresham. "Let him declare what he has to say before you all."

Mounteagle looked hard at him, but he made no remark.

"In my opinion, we ought not to trust him," observed Keyes. "It is plain he is decidedly opposed to us. And if the oath is proposed to him, he may take it with some mental reservation."

"I will guard against that," replied Garnet.

"If I take the oath, I will keep it, father," rejoined Mounteagle. "But I have not yet decided."

"You must do so, then, quickly, my lord," returned Catesby. "You shall have five minutes for reflection. But first you must deliver up your sword."

The earl started.

"We mean *you* no treachery, my lord," observed Keyes, "and expect to be dealt with equal fairness."

Surrendering his sword to Catesby, Mounteagle then walked to the further end of the room, and leaning against the wall, with his back to the conspirators, appeared buried in thought.

"Take Tresham aside," whispered Catesby to Wright. "I do not wish him to overhear our conference. Watch him narrowly, and see that no signal passes between him and Lord Mounteagle."

Wright obeyed; and the others, gathering closely together, began to converse in a low tone.

"It will not do to put him to death," observed Garnet. "From what he stated to Tresham, it appears that his servant was aware of his coming hither. If he disappears, therefore, search will be immediately made, and all will be discovered. We must either instantly secure ourselves by flight, and give up the enterprise, or trust him."

"You are right, father," replied Rookwood. "The danger is imminent."

"We are safe at present," observed Percy, "and may escape to France or Flanders before information can be given against us. Nay, we may carry off Mounteagle with us, for that matter. But I am loth to trust him."

"So am I," rejoined Catesby. "I do not like his looks."

"There is no help," said Fawkes. "We *must* trust him, or give up the enterprise. He may materially aid us, and has himself asserted that he can procure Viviana's liberation from the Tower."

"Pshaw!" exclaimed Catesby, impatiently. "What has that to do with the all-important question we are now considering?"

"Much," returned Fawkes. "And I will not move further in the matter unless that point is insisted on."

"You have become strangely interested in Viviana of late," observed Catesby, sarcastically. "Could I suspect you of so light a passion, I should say you loved her."

A deep flush dyed Fawkes's swarthy cheeks, but he answered in a voice of constrained calmness,

"I *do* love her,—as a daughter."

"Humph!" exclaimed the other, dryly.

"Catesby," rejoined Fawkes, sternly, "you know me well—too well to suppose I would resort to any paltry subterfuge. I am willing to let what you have said pass. But I counsel you not to jest thus in future."

"Jest!" exclaimed Catesby. "I was never more serious in my life."

"Then you do me wrong," retorted Fawkes, fiercely; "and you will repeat the insinuation at your peril."

"My sons—my sons," interposed Garnet, "what means this sudden—this needless quarrel, at a moment when we require the utmost calmness to meet the danger that assails us? Guy Fawkes is right. Viviana *must* be saved. If we desert her, our cause will never prosper. But let us proceed step by step, and first decide upon what is to be done with Lord Mounteagle."

"I am filled with perplexity," replied Catesby.

"Then I will decide for you," replied Percy. "Our project must be abandoned."

"Never," replied Fawkes, energetically. "Fly and secure your own safety. I will stay and accomplish it alone."

"A brave resolution!" exclaimed Catesby, tendering him his hand, which the other cordially grasped. "I will stand by you to the last. No—we have advanced too far to retreat."

"Additional caution will be needful," observed Keyes. "Can we not make it a condition with Lord Mounteagle to retire, till the blow is struck, to his mansion at Hoxton?"

"That would be of no avail," replied Garnet. "We must trust him wholly, or not at all."

"There I agree with you, father," said Percy. "Let us propose the oath of secrecy to him, and detain him here until we have found some secure retreat, utterly unknown to him or to Tresham, whence we can correspond with our friends. A few days will show whether he has betrayed us or not. We need not visit this place again till the moment for action arrives."

"You need not visit it again at all," rejoined Fawkes. "Everything is prepared, and I will undertake to fire the train. Prepare for what is to follow the explosion, and leave the management of that to me."

"I cannot consent to such a course, my son," said Garnet. "The whole risk will thus be yours."

"The whole glory will be mine, also, father," rejoined Fawkes, enthusiastically. "I pray you, let me have my own way."

"Well, be it as you will, my son," returned Garnet, with affected reluctance. "I will not oppose the hand of Heaven, which clearly points you out as the chief agent in this mighty enterprise. In reference to what Percy has said about a retreat till Lord Mounteagle's trust

worthiness can be ascertained," he added to Catesby, "I have just be-thought me of a large retired house on the borders of Enfield Chase, called White Webbs. It has been recently taken by Mrs. Brooksby, and her sister, Anne Vaux, and will afford us a safe asylum."

"An excellent plan, father," cried Catesby. "Since Guy Fawkes is willing to undertake the risk, we will leave Lord Mounteagle in his charge, and go there at once."

"What must be done with Tresham?" asked Percy. "We cannot take him with us, nor must he know of our retreat."

"Leave him with me," said Fawkes.

"You will be at a disadvantage," observed Catesby, "should he take part, as there is reason to fear he may do, with Lord Mounteagle."

"They are both unarmed," returned Fawkes; "but were it otherwise, I would answer with my head for their detention."

"All good Saints guard you, my son!" exclaimed Garnet. "Henceforth we resign the custody of the powder to you."

"It will be in safe keeping," replied Fawkes.

The party then advanced towards Lord Mounteagle, who, hearing their approach, instantly faced them.

"Your decision, my lord?" demanded Catesby.

"You shall have it in a word, sir," replied Mounteagle, firmly. "I will not join you, but I will take the required oath of secrecy."

"Is this your final resolve, my lord?" rejoined Catesby.

"It is," replied the earl.

"It must content us," observed Garnet; "though we hoped you would have lent your active services to further a cause having for its sole object the restoration of the church to which you belong."

"I know not the means whereby you propose to restore it, father," replied Mounteagle, "and I do not desire to know them. But I guess that they are dark and bloody, and as such I can take no part in them."

"And you refuse to give us any counsel or assistance?" pursued Garnet.

"I will not betray you," replied Mounteagle. "I can say nothing further."

"I would rather be promised too little than too much," whispered Catesby to Garnet. "I begin to think him sincere."

"I am of the same opinion, my son," returned Garnet.

"One thing you *shall* do, before I consent to set you free on any terms, my lord," observed Guy Fawkes. "You shall engage to procure the liberation of Viviana Radcliffe from the Tower. You told Tresham you could easily accomplish it."

"I scarcely knew what I said," replied Mounteagle, with a look of embarrassment.

"You spoke confidently, my lord," rejoined Fawkes.

"Because I had no idea I should be compelled to make good my words," returned the earl. "But as a Catholic, and related by marriage to Tresham, who is a suspected person, any active exertions in her behalf on my part might place me in jeopardy."

"*This excuse shall not avail you, my lord,*" replied Fawkes. "You *must weigh your own safety against hers. You stir not hence till you have sworn to free her.*"

"*I must perforce assent, since you will have no refusal,*" replied

Mounteagle; "but I almost despair of success. If I *can* effect her deliverance, I swear to do so."

"Enough," replied Fawkes.

"And now, gentlemen," said Catesby, appealing to the others, "are you willing to let Lord Mounteagle depart upon the proposed terms?"

"We are," they replied.

"I will administer the oath at once," said Garnet; "and you will bear in mind, my son," he added, in a stern voice, to the earl, "that it will be one which cannot be violated without perdition to your soul."

"I am willing to take it," replied Mounteagle.

Producing a primer, and motioning the earl to kneel before him, Garnet then proposed an oath of the most solemn and binding description. The other repeated it after him, and at its conclusion placed the book to his lips.

"Are you satisfied?" he asked, rising.

"I am," replied Garnet.

"And so am I," thought Tresham, who stood in the rear,— "that he will perjure himself."

"Am I now at liberty to depart?" inquired the earl.

"Not yet, my lord," replied Catesby. "You must remain here till midnight."

Lord Mounteagle looked uneasy, but, seeing remonstrance would be useless, he preserved a sullen silence.

"You need have no fear, my lord," said Catesby; "but we must take such precautions as will ensure our safety, in case you intend us any treachery."

"You cannot doubt me, sir, after the oath I have taken," replied Mounteagle, haughtily. "But since you constitute yourself my gaoler, I must abide your pleasure."

"If I *am* your gaoler, my lord," rejoined Catesby, "I will prove to you that I am not neglectful of my office. Will it please you to follow me?"

The earl bowed in acquiescence; and Catesby, marching before him to a small room, the windows of which were carefully barred, pointed to a chair, and, instantly retiring, locked the door upon him. He then returned to the others, and, taking Guy Fawkes aside, observed, in a low tone, "We shall set out instantly for White Webbs. You will remain on guard with Tresham, whom you will, of course, keep in ignorance of our proceedings. After you have set the earl at liberty you can follow us if you choose; but take heed you are not observed."

"Fear nothing," replied Fawkes.

Soon after this, Catesby, and the rest of the conspirators, with the exception of Guy Fawkes and Tresham, quitted the room, and the former concluded they were about to leave the house. He made no remark, however, to his companion, but, getting between him and the door, folded his arms upon his breast, and continued to pace backwards and forwards before it.

"Am I a prisoner as well as Lord Mounteagle?" asked Tresham, after a pause.

"You *must* remain with me here till midnight," replied Fawkes. "We shall not be disturbed."

"*What! are the others gone?*" cried Tresham.

"*They are,*" was the reply.

Tresham's countenance fell, and he appeared to be meditating some project which he could not muster courage to execute.

"Be warned by the past, Tresham," said Fawkes, who had regarded him fixedly for some minutes. "If I find reason to doubt you, I will put it out of your power to betray us a second time."

"You have no reason to doubt me," replied Tresham, with apparent candour. "I only wondered that our friends should leave me without any intimation of their purpose. It is for me, not you, to apprehend some ill design. Am I not to act with you further?"

"That depends upon yourself, and on the proofs you give of your sincerity," replied Fawkes. "Answer me frankly. Do you think Lord Mounteagle will keep his oath?"

"I will stake my life upon it," replied Tresham.

The conversation then dropped, and no attempt was made on either side to renew it. In this way several hours passed, when at length the silence was broken by Tresham, who requested permission to go in search of some refreshment; and Guy Fawkes assenting, they descended to the lower room, and partook of a slight repast.

Nothing further worthy of note occurred. On the arrival of the appointed hour, Guy Fawkes signified to his companion that he might liberate Lord Mounteagle; and immediately availing himself of the permission, Tresham repaired to the chamber, and threw open the door. The earl immediately came forth, and they returned together to the room in which Guy Fawkes remained on guard.

"You are now at liberty to depart, my lord," said the latter; "and Tresham can accompany you if he thinks proper. Remember that you have sworn to procure Viviana's liberation."

"I do," replied the earl.

And he then quitted the house with Tresham.

"You have had a narrow escape, my lord," remarked the latter, as they approached Whitehall, and paused for a moment under the postern of the great western gate.

"True," replied the earl; "but I do not regret the risk I have run. They are now wholly in my power."

"You forget your oath, my lord," said Tresham.

"If I do," replied the earl, "I but follow your example. You have broken one equally solemn, equally binding, and would break a thousand more were they imposed upon you. But I will overthrow this conspiracy, and yet not violate mine."

"I see not how that can be, my lord," replied Tresham.

"You shall learn in due season," replied the earl. "I have had plenty of leisure for reflection in that dark hole, and have hit upon a plan which, I think, cannot fail."

"I hope I am no party to it, my lord," rejoined Tresham. "I dare not hazard myself among them further."

"I cannot do without you," replied Mounteagle; "but I will ensure you against all danger. It will be necessary for you, however, to act with the utmost discretion, and keep a constant guard upon every look and movement, as well as upon your words. You must fully regain the confidence of these men, and lull them into security."

"I see your lordship's drift," replied Tresham. "You wish them to proceed to the last point, to enhance the value of the discovery."

"Right," replied the earl. "The plot must not be discovered till just before its outbreak, when its magnitude and danger will be the more apparent. The reward will then be proportionate. Now you understand me, Tresham."

"Fully," replied the other.

"Return to your own house," rejoined Mounteagle. "We need hold no further communication together till the time for action arrives."

"And that will not be before the meeting of parliament," replied Tresham; "for they intend to overwhelm the king and all his nobles in one common destruction."

"By Heaven! a brave design!" cried Mounteagle. "It is a pity to mar it. I knew it was a desperate and daring project, but should never have conceived aught like this. Its discovery will indeed occasion universal consternation."

"It may benefit you and me to divulge it, my lord," said Tresham; "but the disclosure will deeply and lastingly injure the Church of Rome."

"It would injure it more deeply if the plot succeeded," replied Mounteagle, "because all loyal Catholics must disapprove so horrible and sanguinary a design. But we will not discuss the question further, though what you have said confirms my purpose, and removes any misgiving I might have felt as to the betrayal. Farewell, Tresham. Keep a watchful eye upon the conspirators, and communicate with me should any change take place in their plans. We may not meet for some time. Parliament, though summoned for the third of October, will, in all probability, be prorogued till November."

"In that case," replied Tresham, "you will postpone your disclosure likewise till November?"

"Assuredly," replied Mounteagle. "The king must be convinced of his danger. If it were found out now, he would think lightly of it. But if he has actually set foot upon the mine which a single spark might kindle to his destruction, he will duly appreciate the service rendered him. Farewell! and do not neglect my counsel."

CHAPTER X.—WHITE WEBBS.

TARRYING for a short time within the house after the departure of the others, Guy Fawkes lighted a lantern, and, concealing it beneath his cloak, proceeded to the cellar, to ascertain that the magazine of powder was safe. Satisfied of this, he made all secure, and was about to return to the house, when he perceived a figure approaching him. Standing aside, but keeping on his guard for fear of a surprise, he would have allowed the person to pass, but the other halted, and, after a moment's scrutiny, addressed him by name, in the tones of Humphrey Chetham.

"You seem to haunt this spot, young sir," said Fawkes, in answer to the address. "This is the third time we have met hereabouts."

"On the last occasion," replied Chetham, "I told you Viviana was a prisoner in the Tower. I have now better news for you. She is free."

"Free!" exclaimed Fawkes, joyfully. "By Lord Mounteagle's instrumentality?—But I forget. He has only just left me."

"She has been freed by *my* instrumentality," replied the young merchant. "She escaped from the Tower a few hours ago."

"Where is she?" demanded Guy Fawkes, eagerly.

"In a boat at the stairs near the parliament-house," replied Chetham.

"Heaven and Our Lady be praised!" exclaimed Fawkes. "This is more than I hoped for. Your news is so good, young sir, that I can scarce credit it."

"Come with me to the boat, and you shall soon be satisfied of the truth of my statement," rejoined Chetham.

And, followed by Guy Fawkes, he hurried to the river-side, where a wherry was moored. Within it sat Viviana, covered by the tilt.

Assisting her to land, and finding she was too much exhausted to walk, Guy Fawkes took her in his arms, and carried her to the house he had just quitted.

Humphrey Chetham followed as soon as he had dismissed the waterman. Placing his lovely burden in a seat, Guy Fawkes instantly went in search of such restoratives as the place afforded. Viviana was extremely faint, but after she had swallowed a glass of wine she revived, and, looking around her, inquired where she was.

"Do not ask," replied Fawkes; "let it suffice you are in safety. And now," he added, "perhaps Humphrey Chetham will inform me in what manner he contrived your escape. I am impatient to know."

The young merchant then gave the required information, and Viviana added such particulars as were necessary to the full understanding of the story. Guy Fawkes could scarcely control himself when she related the tortures she had endured, nor was Chetham less indignant.

"You rescued me just in time," said Viviana. "I should have sunk under the next application."

"Thank Heaven you have escaped it!" exclaimed Fawkes. "You owe much to Humphrey Chetham, Viviana."

"I do, indeed," she replied.

"And can you not requite it?" he returned. "Can you not make him happy? Can you not make *me* happy?"

Viviana's pale cheek was instantly suffused with blushes, but she made no answer.

"Oh, Viviana!" cried Humphrey Chetham, "you hear what is said. If you could doubt my love before, you must be convinced of it now. A hope will make me happy. Have I that?"

"Alas! no," she answered. "It would be the height of cruelty, after your kindness, to deceive you. You have not."

The young merchant turned aside to hide his emotion.

"Not even a hope," exclaimed Guy Fawkes, "after what he has done? Viviana, I cannot understand you. Does gratitude form no *part of your nature?*"

"*I hope so,*" she replied; "nay, I am sure so, for I feel the deepest gratitude towards Humphrey Chetham. But gratitude is not love, and *must not be mistaken for it.*"

"I understand the distinction too well," returned the young merchant, sadly.

"It is more than I do," rejoined Guy Fawkes; "and I will frankly confess that I think the important services Humphrey Chetham has rendered you entitle him to your hand. It is seldom—whatever poets may feign—that love is so strongly proved as his has been; and it ought to be adequately requited."

"Say no more about it, I entreat," interposed Chetham.

"But I will deliver my opinion," rejoined Guy Fawkes, "because I am sure what I advise is for Viviana's happiness. No one can love her better than you. No one is more worthy of her. Nor is there any one to whom I so much desire to see her united."

"Oh, Heaven!" exclaimed Viviana. "This is worse than the torture."

"What mean you?" exclaimed Fawkes, in astonishment.

"She means," interposed Chetham, "that this is not the fitting season to urge the subject—that she will never marry."

"True—true," replied Viviana. "If I ever did marry—I ought to select you."

"You ought," replied Fawkes. "And I know nothing of the female heart, if it can be insensible to youth, devotion, and manly appearance like that of Humphrey Chetham."

"You *do* know nothing of it," rejoined Chetham, bitterly. "Women's fancies are unaccountable."

"Such is the received opinion," replied Fawkes; "but as I am ignorant of the sex, I can only judge from report. You are the person I should imagine she would love—nay, to be frank, whom I thought she *did* love."

"No more," said Humphrey Chetham. "It is painful both to Viviana and to me."

"This is not a time for delicacy," rejoined Guy Fawkes. "Viviana has given me the privilege of a father with her; and where her happiness is so much concerned as in the present case, I should imperfectly discharge my duty if I did not speak out. It would sincerely rejoice me, and I am sure contribute materially to her own happiness, if she would unite herself to you."

"I cannot—I cannot," she rejoined. "I will never marry."

"You hear what she says," remarked Chetham. "Do not urge the matter further."

"I admire maiden delicacy and reserve," replied Fawkes; "but when a man has acted as you have done, he deserves to be treated with frankness. I am sure Viviana loves you. Let her tell you so."

"You are mistaken," replied Chetham; "and it is time you should be undeceived. She loves another."

"Is this so?" cried Fawkes, in astonishment.

She made no answer.

"Whom do you love?" he asked.

Still no answer.

"I will tell you whom she loves—and let her contradict me if I am wrong," said Chetham.

"Oh, no!—no!—in pity spare me!" cried Viviana.

"Speak!" thundered Fawkes. "Who is it?"



"Yourself," replied Chetham.

"What!" exclaimed Fawkes, recoiling—"love me! I will not believe it. She loves me as a father—but nothing more, nothing more. But you were right. Let us change the subject. A more fitting season may arrive for its discussion."

After some further conversation, it was agreed that Viviana should be taken to White Webbs; and, leaving her in charge of Humphrey Chetham, Guy Fawkes went in search of a conveyance to Enfield.

Traversing the Strand—every hostel in which was closed—he turned up Wych-street, immediately on the right of which there was a large inn (still in existence), and entering the yard, discovered a knot of carriers moving about with lanterns in their hands. To his inquiries respecting a conveyance to Enfield, one of them answered that he was about to return thither with his waggon at four o'clock—it was then two—and should be glad to take him and his friends. Overjoyed at the intelligence, and at once agreeing to the man's terms, Guy Fawkes hurried back to his companions, and, with the assistance of Humphrey Chetham, contrived to carry Viviana (for she was utterly unable to support herself) to the inn-yard, where she was immediately placed in the waggon, on a heap of fresh straw.

About an hour after this, but long before daybreak, the carrier attached his horses to the waggon and set out. Guy Fawkes and Humphrey Chetham were seated near Viviana, but little was said during the journey, which occupied about three hours. By this time it was broad daylight; and as the carrier stopped at the door of a small inn, Guy Fawkes alighted, and inquired the distance to White Webbs.

"It is about a mile and a half off," replied the man. "If you pursue that lane, it will bring you to a small village about half a mile from this, where you are sure to find some one who will gladly guide you to the house, which is a little out of the road, on the borders of the forest."

He then assisted Viviana to alight, and, Humphrey Chetham descending at the same time, the party took the road indicated—a winding country lane with high hedges, broken by beautiful timber—and proceeding at a slow pace, they arrived in about half an hour at a little cluster of cottages, which Guy Fawkes guessed to be the village alluded to by the carrier. As they approached it, a rustic leaped a hedge, and was about to cross to another field, when Guy Fawkes, calling to him, inquired the way to White Webbs.

"I am going in that direction," replied the man. "If you desire it, I will show you the road."

"I shall feel much indebted to you, friend," returned Fawkes, "and will reward you for your trouble."

"I want no reward," returned the countryman, trudging forward.

Following their guide, after a few minutes' brisk walking they reached the borders of the forest, and took their way along a patch of greensward that skirted it. In some places their track was impeded by *gigantic thorns* and brushwood, while at others avenues opened upon them, affording them peeps into the heart of the wood. It was a beautiful sylvan scene. And as at length they arrived at the head of a *long glade*, at the further end of which a herd of deer were seen, with

their branching antlers mingling with the overhanging boughs, Viviana could not help pausing to admire it.

"King James often hunts within the forest," observed the countryman. "Indeed, I heard one of the rangers say it was not unlikely he might be here to-day. He is at Theobald's Palace now."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Fawkes. "Let us proceed. We lose time. Are we far from the house?"

"Not above a quarter of a mile," was the answer. "You will see it at the next turn of the road."

As the countryman had intimated, they speedily perceived the roof and tall chimneys of an ancient house above the trees, and, as it was now impossible to mistake the road, Guy Fawkes thanked their guide for his trouble, and would have rewarded him, but he refused the gratuity, and, leaping a hedge, disappeared. Pursuing the road, they shortly afterwards arrived at a gate leading to the house—a large building, erected probably at the beginning of Elizabeth's reign—and entering it, they passed under an avenue of trees. On approaching the mansion they observed that many of the windows were closed, and the whole appearance of the place was melancholy and deserted. The garden was overgrown with weeds, and the door looked as if it was rarely opened.

Not discouraged by these appearances, but rather satisfied by them of the security of the asylum, Guy Fawkes proceeded to the back of the house, and entering a court, the flags and stones of which were covered with moss, while the interstices were filled with long grass, Guy Fawkes knocked against a small door, and after repeating the summons it was answered by an old woman-servant, who popped her head out of an upper window, and demanded his business. Guy Fawkes was about to inquire for Mrs. Brooksby, when another head, which proved to be that of Catesby, appeared at the window. On seeing Fawkes and his companions, Catesby instantly descended and unfastened the door. The house proved far more comfortable within than its exterior promised; and the old female domestic having taken word to Anne Vaux that Viviana was below, the former lady, who had not yet risen, sent for her to her chamber, and provided everything for her comfort.

Guy Fawkes and Humphrey Chetham, neither of whom had rested during the night, were glad to obtain a few hours' repose on the floor of the first room into which they were shown, and they were not disturbed until the day had considerably advanced, when Catesby thought fit to rouse them from their slumbers. Explanations were then given on both sides. Chetham detailed the manner of Viviana's escape from the Tower, and Catesby in his turn acquainted them that Father Oldcorne was in the house, having found his way thither after his escape from the dwelling at Lambeth. Guy Fawkes was greatly rejoiced at the intelligence, and shortly afterwards had the satisfaction of meeting with the priest. At noon the whole party assembled, with the exception of Viviana, who, by the advice of Anne Vaux, kept her chamber to recruit herself after the sufferings she had undergone.

Humphrey Chetham, of whom no suspicions were now entertained, and of whom Catesby no longer felt any jealousy, was invited to stay in the house; and he was easily induced to pass his time near Viviana although he might not be able to see her. Long and frequent consult-

tions were held by the conspirators, and letters were despatched by Catesby to the elder Winter, at his seat, Huddington, in Worcestershire, entreating him to make every preparation for the crisis, as well as to Sir Everard Digby, to desire him to assemble as many friends as he could muster against the meeting of parliament, at Dunchurch, in Warwickshire, under the plea of a grand hunting-party.

Arrangements were next made as to the steps to be taken by the different parties after the explosion. Catesby undertook with a sufficient force to seize the Princess Elizabeth, the eldest daughter of James the First, who was then at the residence of the Earl of Harrington, near Coventry, and to proclaim her queen, in case the others should fail in securing the princes. It was supposed that Henry, Prince of Wales (who, it need scarcely be mentioned, died in his youth), would be present with the king, his father, in the parliament-house, and would perish with him; and in this case, as Charles, Duke of York (afterwards Charles the First), would become successor to the throne, it was resolved that he should be seized by Percy, and instantly proclaimed. Other resolutions were decided upon, and the whole time of the conspirators was spent in maturing their projects.

And thus weeks and even months stole on. Viviana had completely gained her strength, and passed a life of perfect seclusion, seldom, if ever, mixing with the others. She, however, took a kindly farewell of Humphrey Chetham before his departure for Manchester (for which place he set out about a fortnight after his arrival at White Webbs, having first sought out his servant, Martin Heydocke); but though strongly urged by Guy Fawkes, she would hold out no hopes of a change in her sentiments towards the young merchant. Meetings were occasionally held by the conspirators elsewhere, and Catesby and Fawkes had more than one interview with Tresham—but never except in places where they were secure from a surprise. The latter end of September had now arrived, and the meeting of parliament was still fixed for the third of October. On the last day of the month Guy Fawkes prepared to start for town, but before doing so he desired to see Viviana. They had not met for some weeks; nor, indeed, since Fawkes had discovered the secret of her heart (and perhaps of his own) had they ever met with the same freedom as heretofore. As she entered the room in which he awaited her coming, a tremor agitated his frame, but he had nerved himself for the interview, and speedily subdued the feeling.

"I am starting for London, Viviana," he said, in a voice of forced calmness. "You may guess for what purpose. But as I may never behold you again, I would not part with you without a confession of my weakness. I will not deny that what Humphrey Chetham stated, and which you have never contradicted—namely, that you loved me, for I must speak out—has produced a strong effect upon me. I have endeavoured to conquer it, but it will return. Till I knew you I never loved, Viviana."

"Indeed!" she exclaimed.

"Never," he replied. "The fairest had not power to move me. But I grieve to say—notwithstanding my struggles—I do not continue equally insensible."

"Ah!" she ejaculated, becoming as pale as death.

"Why should I hesitate to declare my feelings? Why should I not tell you that—though blinded to it so long—I have discovered that I do love you? Why should I hesitate to tell you that I regret this, and lament that we ever met?"

"What mean you?" cried Viviana, with a terrified look.

"I will tell you," replied Fawkes. "Till I saw you, my thoughts were removed from earth, and fixed on one object. Till I saw you, I asked not to live, but to die the death of a martyr."

"Die so still," rejoined Viviana. "Forget me—oh! forget me."

"I cannot," replied Fawkes. "I have striven against it; but your image is perpetually before me. Nay, at this very moment, when I am about to set out on the enterprise, you alone detain me."

"I am glad of it!" exclaimed Viviana, fervently. "Oh, that I could prevent you—could save you!"

"Save me!" echoed Fawkes, bitterly. "You destroy me."

"How?" she asked.

"Because I am sworn to this project," he rejoined; "and if I were turned from it, I would perish by my own hand."

"Oh! say not so," replied Viviana, "but listen to me. Abandon it, and I will devote myself to you."

Guy Fawkes gazed at her for a moment passionately, and then, covering his face with his hands, appeared torn by conflicting emotions. Viviana approached him, and, pressing his arm, asked in an entreating voice,

"Are you still determined to pursue your dreadful project?"

"I am," replied Fawkes, uncovering his face, and gazing at her; "but, if I remain here a moment longer, I shall not be able to do so."

"I will detain you, then," she rejoined, "and exercise the power I possess over you for your benefit."

"No!" he replied, vehemently. "It must not be. Farewell for ever!" And breaking from her, he rushed out of the room. As he gained the passage, he encountered Catesby, who looked abashed at seeing him.

"I have overheard what has passed," said the latter, "and applaud your resolution. Few men, similarly circumstanced, would have acted as you have done."

"You would not," said Fawkes, coldly.

"Perhaps not," rejoined Catesby. "But that does not lessen my admiration of your conduct."

"I am devoted to one object," replied Fawkes, "and nothing shall turn me from it."

"Remove yourself instantly from temptation, then," replied Catesby. "I will meet you at the cellar beneath the parliament-house to-morrow night."

With this, he accompanied Guy Fawkes to the door; and the latter, without hazarding a look behind him, set out for London, where he arrived at nightfall. On the following night Fawkes examined the cellar, and found it in all respects as he had left it; and, apprehensive lest some difficulty might arise, he resolved to make every preparation. He, accordingly, *pierced the sides of several of the barrels piled against the walls with a gimlet, and inserted in the holes small pieces of slow-burning match.* Not content with this, he staved in the two

of the uppermost tier, and scattered powder among them to secure their instantaneous ignition. This done, he took a powder-horn, with which he was provided, and kneeling down, and holding his lantern so as to throw a light upon the floor, laid a train to one of the lower barrels, and brought it within a few inches of the door, intending to fire it from that point. His arrangements completed, he arose, and muttered,

"A vessel is provided for my escape in the river, and my companions advise me to use a slow match, which will allow me to get out of harm's way. But I will see the deed done, and, if the train fails, will hold a torch to the barrels myself."

At this juncture a slight tap was heard without. Guy Fawkes instantly masked his lantern, and, cautiously opening the door, beheld Catesby.

"I am come to tell you that parliament is prorogued," said the latter. "The house does not meet till the fifth of November. We have another month to wait."

"I am sorry for it," rejoined Fawkes. "I have just laid the train. The lucky moment will pass."

And, locking the door, he proceeded with Catesby to the adjoining house. They had scarcely been gone more than a second when two figures muffled in cloaks emerged from behind a wall.

"The train is laid," observed the foremost, "and they are gone to the house. You might seize them now without danger."

"That will not answer my purpose," replied the other. "I will give them another month."

"Another month!" replied the first speaker. "Who knows what may happen in that time? They may abandon their project."

"There is no fear of that," replied the other. "But you had better go and join them."

CHAPTER XI.—THE MARRIAGE IN THE FOREST.

TRESHAM—for it will have been conjectured that he was one of the speakers mentioned in the preceding chapter—on separating from Lord Mounteagle, took the same direction as the conspirators. He hesitated for some time before venturing to knock at the garden-gate; and, when he had done so, felt half-disposed to take to his heels. But shame restrained him; and hearing footsteps approach, he gave the customary signal, and was instantly admitted by Guy Fawkes.

"What brings you here?" demanded the latter, as they entered the house, and made fast the door behind them.

"I have just heard that parliament is prorogued to the fifth of November," replied Tresham, "and came to tell you so."

"I already know it," returned Fawkes, gloomily; "and for the first time feel some misgiving as to the issue of our enterprise."

"Why so?" inquired Tresham.

"November is unlucky to me," rejoined Fawkes; "and I cannot recollect a year in my life in which some ill has not befallen me during that month, especially on the fifth day. On the last fifth of November nearly died of a fever at Madrid. It is a strange and unfortunate

coincidence that the meeting of the parliament should be appointed for that particular day."

"Shall I tell you what I think it portends?" hesitated Tresham.

"Do so," replied Fawkes, "and speak boldly. I am no child, to be frightened at shadows."

"You have more than once declared your intention of perishing with our foes," rejoined Tresham. "The design, though prosperous in itself, may be fatal to you."

"You are right," replied Fawkes. "I have little doubt I shall perish on that day. You are both aware of my superstitious nature, and are not ignorant that many mysterious occurrences have combined to strengthen the feeling: such as the dying words of the prophetess, Elizabeth Orton—her warning speech when she was raised from the dead by Doctor Dee—and lastly, the vision at St. Winifred's Well. What if I tell you the saint has again appeared to me?"

"In a dream?" inquired Catesby, in a slightly sceptical tone.

"Ay, in a dream," returned Fawkes. "But I saw her as plainly as if I had been awake. It was the same vapoury figure—the same transparent robes, the same benign countenance, only far more pitying than before—that I beheld at Holywell. I heard no sound issue from her lips, but I *felt* that she warned me to desist."

"Do you accept the warning?" asked Tresham, eagerly.

"It is needless to answer," replied Fawkes. "I have laid the train to-night."

"You have infected me with your misgivings," observed Tresham. "Would the enterprise had never been undertaken!"

"But being undertaken, it must be gone through with," rejoined Catesby, sternly. "Hark'e, Tresham. You promised us two thousand pounds in aid of the project, but have constantly deferred payment of the sum on some plea or other."

"Because I have not been able to raise it," replied Tresham, sullenly. "I have tried in vain to sell part of my estates at Rushton, in Northamptonshire. I cannot effect impossibilities."

"Tush!" cried Catesby, fiercely. "You well know I ask no impossibility. I will no longer be trifled with. The money must be forthcoming by the tenth of October, or you shall pay the penalty with your life."

"This is the language of a cut-throat, Mr. Catesby," replied Tresham.

"It is the only language I will hold to you," rejoined Catesby, contemptuously. "Look you disappoint me not, or take the consequences."

"I must leave for Northamptonshire at once, then," said Tresham.

"Do as you please," returned Catesby. "Play the cut-throat yourself, and ease some rich miser of his store, if you think fit. Bring us the money, and we will not ask how you came by it."

"Before we separate," said Tresham, disregarding these sneers, "I wish to be resolved on one point. Who are to be saved from destruction?"

"Why do you ask?" inquired Fawkes.

"Because I *must stipulate* for the lives of my brothers-in-law, the *Lords Mounteagle and Stourton.*"

"If anything detains them from the meeting, well and good," replied

Catesby. "But no warning must be given them. That would infallibly lead to a discovery of the plot."

"Some means might surely be adopted to put them on their guard without danger to ourselves?" urged Tresham.

"I know of none," replied Catesby.

"Nor I," added Fawkes. "If I did, I would warn Lord Montague, and some others whom I shall grieve to destroy."

"We are all similarly circumstanced," replied Catesby. "Keyes is anxious for the preservation of his patron and friend, Lord Mordaunt, Percy, for the Earl of Northumberland,—I, myself, would gladly save the young Earl of Arundel. But we must sacrifice our private feeling for the general good."

"We must," acquiesced Fawkes.

"We shall not meet again till the night of the tenth of October," said Catesby, "when take care you are in readiness with the money."

Upon this the conversation dropped, and soon afterwards Tresham departed. When he found himself alone, he suffered his rage to find vent in words. "Perdition seize them!" he cried; "I shall now lose two thousand pounds, in addition to what I have already advanced; and, as Mounteagle will not have the disclosure made till the beginning of November, there is no way of avoiding payment. They would not fall into the snare I laid to throw the blame of the discovery, when it takes place, upon their own indiscretion. But I must devise some other plan. The warning shall proceed from an unknown quarter. A letter, written in a feigned hand, and giving some obscure intimation of danger, shall be delivered with an air of mystery to Mounteagle. This will serve as a plea for its divulgement to the Earl of Salisbury. Well, well, they shall have the money; but they shall pay me back in other coin."

Early on the following day Catesby and Fawkes proceeded to White Webbs. Garnet was greatly surprised to see them, and could not conceal his disappointment at the cause of their return.

"This delay bodes no good," he observed. "Parliament has been so often prorogued, that I begin to think some suspicion is entertained of our design."

"Make your mind easy, then," replied Catesby. "I have made due inquiries, and find the meeting is postponed to suit the king's convenience, who wishes to prolong his stay at Royston. He may probably have some secret motive for the delay, but I am sure it in no way concerns us."

Everything being now fully arranged, the conspirators had only to wait patiently for the arrival of the expected fifth of November. Most of them decided upon passing the interval in the country. Ambrose Rookwood departed for Clopton, near Stratford-upon-Avon—a seat belonging to Lord Carew, where his family were staying; Keyes went to visit Lord Mordaunt at Turvey, in Bedfordshire; and Percy and the two Wrights set out for Gothurst, in Buckinghamshire, to desire Sir Everard Digby to postpone the grand hunting-party which he was to hold at Dunsmore Heath, as an excuse for mustering a strong party of Catholics, to the beginning of November. The two Winters repaired to their family mansion, Huddington, in Worcestershire; while Fawkes and Catesby, together with the two priests, remained at White Webbs.

The three latter held daily conferences together, but were seldom joined by Fawkes, who passed his time in the adjoining forest, selecting its densest and most intricate parts for his rambles.

It was now the beginning of October, and, as is generally the case in the early part of this month, the weather was fine, and the air pure and bracing. The forest could scarcely have been seen to greater advantage. The leaves had assumed their gorgeous autumnal tints, and the masses of timber, variegated in colour, presented an inexpressibly beautiful appearance. Guy Fawkes spent hours in the depths of the wood. His sole companions were the lordly stag and the timid hare, that occasionally started across his path. Since his return he had sedulously avoided Viviana, and they had met only twice, and then no speech had passed between them. One day, when he had plunged even deeper than usual into the forest, and had seated himself on the stump of a decayed tree, with his eyes fixed on a small clear rivulet welling at his feet, he saw the reflection of a female figure in the water; and, filled with the idea of the vision of Saint Winifred, at first imagined he was about to receive another warning. But a voice that thrilled to his heart's core soon undeceived him, and, turning, he beheld Viviana. She was habited in a riding-dress, and appeared prepared to set out upon a journey.

"So you have tracked me to my solitude," he observed, in a tone of forced coldness. "I thought I was secure from interruption here."

"You will forgive me, I am sure, when you know my errand," she replied. "It is to take an eternal farewell of you."

"Indeed!" he exclaimed. "Are you about to quit White Webbs?"

"I am," she mournfully rejoined. "I am about to set out with Father Oldcorne for Gothurst, where I shall remain till all is over."

"I entirely approve your determination," returned Fawkes, after a short pause.

"I know you would do so, or I should have consulted you upon it," she rejoined. "And as you appear to avoid me, I would fain have departed without taking leave of you, but found it impossible to do so."

"You well know my motive for avoiding you, Viviana," rejoined Fawkes. "We are no longer what we were to each other. A fearful struggle has taken place within me, though I have preserved an unmoved exterior, between passion and the sense of my high calling. I have told you I never loved before, and fancied my heart immovable as adamant. But I now find out my error. It is a prey to a raging and constant flame. I have shunned you," he continued, with increased excitement, "because the sight of you shakes my firmness—because I feel it sinful to think of you in preference to holier objects—and because, after I have quitted you, your image alone engrosses my thoughts. Here, in the depths of this wood, by the side of this brook, I can commune with my soul—can abstract myself from the world and the thoughts of the world—from you—yes, you, who are all the world to me now—and prepare to meet my end."

"Then you are resolved to die?" she cried.

"I shall abide the explosion, and nothing but a miracle can save me," returned Fawkes.

"And think not it will be exerted in your behalf," she replied.

"Heaven does not approve your design, and you will assuredly incur its vengeance by your criminal conduct."

"Viviana," replied Guy Fawkes, rising, "man cannot read my heart, but Heaven can; and the sincerity of my purpose will be recognised above. What I am about to do is for the regeneration of our holy religion; and if the welfare of that religion is dear to the Supreme Being, our cause must prosper. If the contrary, it deserves to fail, and will fail. I have ever told you that I care not what becomes of myself. I am now more than ever indifferent to life—or rather," he added, in a sombre tone, "I am anxious to die."

"Your dreadful wish, I fear, will be accomplished," replied Viviana, sadly. "I have been constantly haunted by frightful apprehensions respecting you, and my dead father has appeared to me in my dreams. His spirit, if such it were, seemed to gaze upon me with a mournful look, and, as I thought, pronounced your name in piteous accents."

"These forebodings chime with my own," muttered Fawkes, repressing a shudder; "but nothing shall shake me. It will inflict a bitter pang upon me to part with you, Viviana—the bitterest I can ever feel—and I shall be glad when it is over."

"I echo your own wish," she returned, "and deeply lament that we ever met. But the fate that brought us together must for ever unite us."

"What mean you?" he inquired, gazing fixedly at her.

"There is one sad consolation which you can afford me, and which you owe me for the deep and lasting misery I shall endure on your account," replied Viviana; "a consolation that will enable me to bear your loss with fortitude, and to devote myself wholly to Heaven."

"Whatever I can do that will not interfere with my purpose you may command," he rejoined.

"What I have to propose will not interfere with it," she answered. "Now, hear me, and put the sole construction I deserve on my conduct. Father Garnet is at a short distance from us, behind those trees, waiting my summons. I have informed him of my design, and he approves of it. It is to unite us in marriage—solemnly unite us—that, though I may never live with you as a wife, I may mourn you as a widow. Do you consent?"

Guy Fawkes returned an affirmative, in a voice broken by emotion.

"The moment the ceremony is over," pursued Viviana, "I shall start with Father Oldcorne for Gothurst. We shall never meet again in this world."

"Unless I succeed," said Fawkes.

"You will *not* succeed," replied Viviana. "If I thought so, I should not take this step. I look upon it as an espousal with the dead." So saying, she hurried away, and, disappearing beneath the covert, returned in a few seconds with Garnet.

"I have a strange duty to perform for you, my son," said Garnet to Fawkes, who remained motionless and stupified; "but I am right willing to perform it, because I think it will lead to your future happiness with the fair creature who has bestowed her affections on you."

"Do not speculate on the future, father," cried Viviana. "You know *why* I asked you to perform this ceremony. You know, also, that I have made preparations for instant departure; and that I indulge no hope of seeing Guy Fawkes again."

"All this I know, dear daughter," returned Garnet; "but, in spite of your anticipations of ill, I still hope that your union may prove auspicious."

"I take you to witness, father," said Viviana, "that, in bestowing my hand upon Guy Fawkes, I bestow at the same time all my possessions upon him. He is free to use them as he thinks proper,—even in the furtherance of his design against the state, which, though I cannot approve it, seems good to him."

"This must not be," cried Fawkes.

"It *shall be*," rejoined Viviana. "Proceed with the ceremony, father."

"Let her have her own way, my son," observed Garnet, in a low tone. "Under any circumstances, her estates must now be necessarily yours."

He then took a breviary from his vest, and, placing them near each other, began to read aloud the marriage service appointed by the Romish Church. And there, in that secluded spot, and under such extraordinary circumstances, with no other witnesses than the ancient trees around them and the brook rippling at their feet, were Guy Fawkes and Viviana united. The ceremony over, Guy Fawkes pressed his bride to his breast, and imprinted a kiss upon her lips.

"I have broken my faith to Heaven, to which I was first espoused," he cried.

"No," she returned; "you will now return to your first and holiest choice. Think of me only as I shall think of you—as of the dead."

With this, the party slowly and silently returned to the house, where they found a couple of steeds, with luggage strapped to the saddles, at the door. Father Oldcorne was already mounted, and in a few minutes Viviana was by his side. Before her departure she bade Guy Fawkes a tender farewell; and at this trying juncture her firmness nearly deserted her. But, rousing herself, she sprang upon her horse, and, urging the animal into a quick pace, and followed by Oldcorne, she speedily disappeared from view. Guy Fawkes watched her out of sight, and, shunning the regards of Catesby, who formed one of the group, struck into the forest, and was not seen again till the following day.

The tenth of October having arrived, Guy Fawkes and Catesby repaired to the place of rendezvous. But the night passed, and Tresham did not appear. Catesby was angry and disappointed, and could not conceal his apprehensions of treachery. Fawkes took a different view of the matter, and thought it not improbable that their confederate's absence might be occasioned by the difficulty he found in complying with their demands; and this opinion was confirmed the next morning by the arrival of a letter from Tresham, stating that he had been utterly unable to effect the sales he contemplated, and could not, therefore, procure the money till the end of the month.

"I will immediately go down to Rushton," said Catesby, "and, if I find him disposed to palter with us, I will call him to instant account. But Garnet informs me that Viviana has bestowed all her wealth upon you. Are you willing to devote it to the good cause?"

"No!" replied Fawkes, in a tone so decisive that his companion felt it would be useless to urge the matter further. "I give my life to the cause—that must suffice."

The subject was never renewed. At night, Catesby, having procured a powerful steed, set out upon his journey to Northamptonshire, while Fawkes returned to White Webbs. About a fortnight passed unmarked by any event of importance. Despatches were received from Catesby, stating that he had received the money from Tresham, and had expended it in procuring horses and arms. He also added that he had raised numerous recruits on various pretences. This letter was dated from Ashby Saint Leger's, the seat of his mother, Lady Catesby; but he expressed his intention of proceeding to Coughton Hall, near Alcester, in Warwickshire, the residence of Mr. Thomas Throckmorton (a wealthy Catholic gentleman), whither Sir Everard Digby had removed with his family, to be in readiness for the grand hunting-party to be held on the fifth of November on Dunsmore Heath. Here he expected to be joined by the two Wrights, the Winters, Rookwood, Keyes, and the rest of the conspirators, and undertook to bring them all up to White Webbs on Saturday the twenty-sixth of October.

By this time Guy Fawkes had in a great degree recovered his equanimity, and, left alone with Garnet, held long and frequent religious conferences with him; it being evidently his desire to prepare himself for his expected fate. He spent the greater part of the nights in solitary vigils—fasted even more rigorously than he was enjoined to do—and prayed with such fervour and frequency, that, fearing an ill effect upon his health, and almost upon his mind, which had become exalted to the highest pitch of enthusiasm, Garnet thought it necessary to check him. The priest did not fail to note that Viviana's name never passed his lips, and that, in all their walks in the forest, he carefully shunned the scene of his espousals.

And thus time flew by. On the evening of the twenty-sixth of October, in accordance with Catesby's intimation, the conspirators arrived. They were all assembled at supper, and were relating the different arrangements which had been made in anticipation of the important event, when Garnet observed, with a look of sudden uneasiness, to Catesby, "You said in one of your letters that you would bring Tresham with you, my son. Why do I not see him?"

"He sent a message to Coughton to state that, having been attacked by a sudden illness, he was unable to join us," replied Catesby, "but as soon as he could leave his bed he would hasten to London. This may be a subterfuge, but I shall speedily ascertain the truth, for I have sent my servant Bates to Rushton to investigate the matter. I ought to tell you," he added, "that he has given substantial proof of his devotion to the cause by sending another thousand pounds, to be expended in the purchase of arms and horses."

"I hope it is not dust thrown into our eyes," returned Garnet. "I have always feared Tresham would deceive us at the last."

"This sudden illness looks suspicious, I must own," said Catesby. "Has aught been heard of Lord Mounteagle?"

"Guy Fawkes heard that he was at his residence at Southwark yesterday," returned Garnet.

"So far good," replied Catesby. "Did you visit the cellar where the powder is deposited?" he added, turning to Fawkes.

"I did," replied the other, "and found all secure. The powder is in excellent preservation. Before quitting the spot I placed certain

private marks against the door, by which I can tell whether it is opened during our absence."

"A wise precaution," returned Catesby. "And now, gentlemen," he added, filling a goblet with wine, "success to our enterprise! Everything is prepared," he continued, as the pledge was enthusiastically drunk. "I have got together a company of above two hundred men, all well armed and appointed, who will follow me wherever I choose to lead them. They will be stationed near Dunsmore Heath on the fifth of next month, and as soon as the event of the explosion is known I shall ride thither as fast as I can, and, hurrying with my troops to Coventry, seize the Princess Elizabeth; Percy and Keyes will secure the person of the Duke of York, and proclaim him king; while upon the rest will devolve the arduous duty of rousing our Catholic brethren in London to rise to arms."

"Trust to us to rouse them," shouted several voices.

"Let each man swear not to swerve from the fulfilment of his task," cried Catesby. "Swear it upon this cup of wine, in which we will all mix our blood."

And as he spoke, he pricked his arm with the point of his sword, and suffered a few drops of blood to fall into the goblet, while the others, roused to a state of frenzied enthusiasm, imitated his example, and afterwards raised the horrible mixture to their lips, pronouncing, at the same time, the oath. Guy Fawkes was the last to take the pledge, and, crying in a loud voice, "I swear not to quit my post till the explosion is over," he drained the cup.

After this they adjourned to a room in another wing of the house, fitted up as a chapel, where mass was performed by Garnet, and the sacrament administered to the whole assemblage. They were about to retire for the night, when a sudden knocking was heard at the door. Reconnoitring the intruder through an upper window overlooking the court, Catesby perceived it was Bates, who was holding a smoking and mud-bespattered steed by the bridle.

"Well, what news do you bring?" cried Catesby, as he admitted him. "Have you seen Tresham?"

"No," replied Bates. "His illness was a mere pretence. He has left Rushton secretly for London."

"I knew it," cried Garnet. "He has again betrayed us."

"He shall die," said Catesby.

And the determination was echoed by all the other conspirators. Instead of retiring to rest, they passed the night in anxious deliberation, and it was at last proposed that Guy Fawkes should proceed without loss of time to Southwark, to keep watch near the house of Lord Mounteagle, and if possible ascertain whether Tresham had visited it.

To this he readily agreed; but, before setting out, he took Catesby aside for a moment, and asked, "Did you see Viviana at Coughton?"

"Only for a moment, and that just before I left the place," was the answer. "She desired to be remembered to you, and said you were never absent from her thoughts or prayers."

Guy Fawkes turned away to hide his emotion, and, mounting one of the horses brought by the conspirators, rode off towards London.

CHAPTER XII.—THE FIFTH OF NOVEMBER.

ON the same day as the occurrences last related, Lord Mounteagle, who was then staying at Southwark, suddenly intimated his intention of passing the night at his country mansion at Hoxton—a change of place which, trivial as it seemed at the moment, afterwards assumed an importance, from the circumstances that arose out of it. At the latter part of the day he accordingly proceeded to Hoxton, accompanied by his customary attendants; and all appeared to pass on as usual, until, just as supper was over, one of his pages arrived from town, and desired to see his lordship immediately.

Affecting to treat the matter with indifference, Lord Mounteagle carelessly ordered the youth to be ushered into his presence; and when he appeared, he demanded his business. The page replied, that he brought a letter for his lordship, which had been delivered under circumstances of great mystery.

"I had left the house just as it grew dusk," he said, "on an errand of little importance, when a man, muffled in a cloak, suddenly issued from behind a corner, and demanded whether I was one of your lordship's servants? On my replying in the affirmative, he produced this letter, and enjoined me, as I valued my life and your lordship's safety, to deliver it into your hands without delay."

So saying, he delivered the letter to his lord, who, gazing at its address, which was, "To the Right Honourable the Lord Mounteagle," observed, "There is nothing very formidable in its appearance. What can it mean?"

Without even breaking the seal, which was secured with a silken thread, he gave it to one of his gentlemen, named Ward, who was standing near him.

"Read it aloud, sir," said the earl, with a slight smile. "I have no doubt it is some vapouring effusion, which will afford us occasion for laughter. Before I hear what the writer has to say, I can promise him he shall not intimidate me."

Thus exhorted, Ward broke open the letter, and read as follows:—

"My lord, out of the love I bear to some of your friends, I have a care of your preservation. Therefore I would advise you, as you tender your life, to devise some excuse to shift from your attendance at this parliament, for God and man have concurred to punish the wickedness of this time. Think not slightly of this advice, but retire into the country, where you may expect the event in safety: for, though there be no appearance of any stir, yet I say they shall receive a terrible blow this parliament, and yet they shall not know who hurts them. This counsel is not to be contemned. It may do you good, and can do you no harm, for the danger is passed as soon as you have burned the letter. God, I hope, will give you grace to make good use of it, to whose holy protection I commend you."

"A singular letter!" exclaimed Mounteagle, as soon as Ward had finished. "What is your opinion of it?"

"*I think it hints at some dangerous plot, my lord,*" replied Ward, *who had received his instructions; "some treason against the state. With submission, I would advise your lordship instantly to take it to the Earl of Salisbury."*

"I see nothing in it," replied the earl. "What is your opinion, Mervyn?" he added, turning to another of his gentlemen, to whom he had likewise given his lesson.

"I am of the same mind as Ward," replied the attendant. "Your lordship will hardly hold yourself excused, if you neglect to give due warning, should aught occur hereafter."

"Say you so, sirs?" cried Lord Mounteagle. "Let me hear it once more." The letter was accordingly read again by Ward, and the earl feigned to weigh over each passage.

"I am advised not to attend the parliament," he said, "'for God and man have concurred to punish the wickedness of this time.' That is too vague to be regarded. Then I am urged to retire into the country. The recommendation must proceed from some discontented Catholic, who does not wish me to be present at the opening of the house. This is not the first time I have been so adjured. 'They shall receive a terrible blow this parliament, and yet shall not know who hurts them.' That is mysterious enough, but it may mean nothing—any more than what follows, namely, 'the danger is passed as soon as you have burnt the letter.'"

"I do not think so, my lord," replied Ward; "and though I cannot explain the riddle, I am sure it means mischief."

"Well," said Lord Mounteagle, "since you are of this mind, I must lose no time in communicating the letter to the secretary of state. It is better to err on the safe side."

Accordingly, after some further consultation, he set out at that late hour for Whitehall, where he roused the Earl of Salisbury, and showed him the letter. It is almost needless to state that the whole was a preconcerted scheme between these two crafty statesmen; but as the interview took place in the presence of their attendants, the utmost caution was observed.

Salisbury pretended to be greatly alarmed at the communication, and coupling it, he said, with previous intelligence which he had received, he could not help fearing, to adopt the words of the writer of the mysterious letter, that the parliament was indeed threatened with some "terrible blow." Acting, apparently, upon this supposition, he caused such of the lords of the privy council as lodged at Whitehall to be summoned, and, submitting the letter to them, they all concurred in the opinion that it referred to some dangerous plot, though none could give a guess at its precise nature.

"It is clearly some Popish project," said Salisbury, "or Lord Mounteagle would not have been the party warned. We must keep a lookout upon the disaffected of his faith."

"As I have been the means of revealing the plot to your lordship—if plot it be—I must pray you to deal gently with them," rejoined Mounteagle.

"I will be as lenient as I can," returned Salisbury; "but in a matter of this kind little favour can be shown. If your lordship will enable me to discover the principal actors in this affair, I will take care that no innocent party suffers."

"You ask an impossibility," replied Mounteagle. "I know nothing beyond what can be gathered from that letter. But I pray your lordship not to make it a means of exercising unnecessary severity towards the members of my religion."

"On that you may rely," returned the earl. "His majesty will not return from the hunting expedition on which he is engaged at Royston till Thursday next, the 30th. I think it scarcely worth while (considering his naturally timid nature, with which your lordships are well acquainted) to inform him of the threatened danger until his arrival at the palace. It will then be time enough to take any needful steps, as parliament will not meet for four or five days afterwards."

In the policy of this course the privy councillors agreed, and it was arranged that the matter should be kept perfectly secret until the king's opinion had been taken upon the letter. The assemblage then broke up, it being previously arranged that, for fear of some attempt upon his life, Lord Mounteagle should remain within the palace till full inquiries had been instituted into the affair. When the two confederate nobles were left alone, Salisbury observed, with a slight laugh, to his companion,

"Thus far we have proceeded well, and without suspicion, and, rely upon it, none shall fall on you. As soon as all is over, the most important post the king has to bestow shall be yours."

"But what of Tresham?" asked Mounteagle. "He was the deliverer of this letter, and I have little faith in him."

"Hm!" said Salisbury, after a moment's reflection; "if you think it desirable, we can remove him to the Tower, where he can be easily silenced."

"It will be better so," replied Mounteagle. "He may else babble hereafter. I gave him a thousand pounds to send in his own name to the conspirators the other day, to lure them into our nets."

"It shall be repaid you a hundred-fold," replied Salisbury. "But we are observed, and must therefore separate." So saying, he withdrew to his own chamber, while Lord Mounteagle was ushered to the apartments allotted to him.

To return to Guy Fawkes. Arriving at Southwark, he stationed himself near Lord Mounteagle's residence. But he observed nothing to awaken his suspicions, until early in the morning he perceived a page approaching the mansion, whom, from his livery, he knew to be one of Lord Mounteagle's household (it was, in fact, the very youth who had delivered the mysterious letter), and from him he ascertained all that had occurred. Filled with alarm, and scarcely knowing what to do, he crossed the river, and proceeding to the cellar, examined the marks at the door, and finding all precisely as he had left it, felt certain that, whatever discovery had been made, the magazine had not been visited.

He next repaired to the house, of which he possessed the key, and was satisfied that no one had been there. Somewhat relieved by this, he yet determined to keep watch during the day, and, concealing himself near the cellar, remained on the look-out till night. But no one came; nor did anything occur to excite his suspicions. He would not, however, quit his post till about six o'clock on the following evening, when, thinking further delay might be attended with danger, he set out to White Webbs, to give his companions intelligence of the letter.

His news was received by all with the greatest alarm, and not one except Catesby, who strove to put a bold face upon the matter, though 'was full of inward misgiving, but confessed that he thought all chance of success was at an end. While deliberating upon what

should be done in this fearful emergency, they were greatly alarmed by a sudden knocking without. All the conspirators concealed themselves, except Guy Fawkes, who, opening the door, found, to his infinite surprise, that the summons proceeded from Tresham. He said nothing till the other had entered the house, and then, suddenly drawing his dagger, held it to his throat.

"Make your shrift quickly, traitor," he cried, in a furious tone, "for your last hour is arrived. What ho!" he shouted to the others, who instantly issued from their hiding-places, "the fox has ventured into the lion's den."

"You distrust me wrongfully," rejoined Tresham, with more confidence than he usually exhibited in time of danger; "I am come to warn you, not betray you. Is this the return you make me for the service?"

"Villain!" cried Catesby, rushing up to him, and holding his drawn sword to his breast; "you have conveyed the letter to Lord Mounteagle."

"It is false," replied Tresham; "I have only just heard of it; and, in spite of the risk I knew I should run from your suspicions, I came to tell you what had happened."

"Why did you feign illness, and depart secretly for town, instead of joining us at Coughton?" demanded Catesby.

"I will instantly explain my motive, which, though it may not be satisfactory to you on one point, will be so on another," replied Tresham, unhesitatingly, and with apparent frankness. "I was fearful you would make a further tool of me, and resolved not to join you again till a few days before the outbreak of the plot. To this determination I should have adhered had I not learnt to-night that a letter had been transmitted by some one to Lord Mounteagle, which he had conveyed to the Earl of Salisbury. It may not convey any notion of the plot, but it is certain to occasion alarm, and I thought it my duty, in spite of every personal consideration, to give you warning. If you design to escape, there is yet time. A vessel lies in the river, in which we can all embark for Flanders."

"Can he be innocent?" said Catesby, in a whisper to Garnet.

"If I had betrayed you," continued Tresham, "I should not have come hither. And I have no motive for such baseness, for I am in equal danger with yourselves. But though the alarm has been given, I do not think any discovery will be made. They are evidently on the wrong scent."

"I hope so," replied Catesby; "but I fear the contrary."

"Shall I put him to death?" demanded Fawkes of Garnet.

"Do not sully your hands with his blood, my son," returned Garnet.

"If he has betrayed us, he will reap the traitor's reward here and hereafter. If he has not, it will be to take away a life unjustly. Let him depart. We shall feel more secure without him."

"Will it be safe to set him free, father?" cried Fawkes.

"I think so," replied Garnet. "We will not admit him to our further conferences; but let us act mercifully."

The major part of the conspirators concurring in this opinion, though Fawkes and Catesby were opposed to it, Tresham was suffered to depart. As soon as he was gone, Garnet avowed that the further

secution of the design appeared so hazardous, that it ought to be abandoned, and that, in his opinion, each of the conspirators had better consult his own safety by flight. He added, that at some future period the design might be resumed, or another planned, which might be more securely carried out.

After much discussion, all seemed disposed to acquiesce in the proposal except Fawkes, who adhered doggedly to his purpose, and treated the danger so slightly, that he gradually brought the others round to his views. At length it was resolved that Garnet should set out immediately for Coughton Hall, and place himself under the protection of Sir Everard Digby, and there await the result of the attempt, while the other conspirators decided upon remaining in town, in some secure places of concealment, until the event was known. Unmoved as ever, Guy Fawkes declared his intention of watching over the magazine of powder.

"If anything happens to me," he said, "you will take care of yourselves. You well know nothing will be wrung from me."

Catesby and the others, aware of his resolute nature, affected to remonstrate with him, but they willingly suffered him to take his own course. Attended by Bates, Garnet then set out for Warwickshire, and the rest of the conspirators proceeded to London,² where they dispersed, after appointing Lincoln's Inn Walks as their place of midnight rendezvous. Each then made preparations for sudden flight in case it should be necessary, and Rookwood provided relays of horses all the way to Dunchurch.

Guy Fawkes alone remained at his post. He took up his abode in the cellar, resolved to blow up himself, together with his foes, in case of a surprise. On Thursday, the thirty-first of October, the king returned to Whitehall, and the mysterious letter was laid before him in the presence of the privy council by the Earl of Salisbury. James perused it carefully, but could scarcely hide his perplexity.

"Your majesty will not fail to remark the expressions, 'a terrible blow' to the parliament, and 'that the danger will be past as soon as you have burnt the letter,' evidently referring to combustion," observed the earl.

"You are right, Salisbury," said James, snatching at the suggestion. "I should not wonder if these mischievous Papists mean to blow us all up with gunpowder."

"Your majesty has received a divine illumination," returned the earl. "Such an idea never occurred to me; but it must be as you intimate."

"Undoubtedly—undoubtedly," replied the monarch, pleased with the compliment to his sagacity, though alarmed by the danger; "but what desperate traitors they must be to imagine such a deed. Blow us up! God's mercy, that were a dreadful death! And yet that must evidently be the meaning of the passage. How else can it be construed, except by reference to the suddenness of the act, which might be as quickly performed as that paper would take to be consumed in the fire?"

"Your majesty's penetration has discovered the truth," replied Salisbury, "and by the help of your wisdom I will fully develop this dark design. Where think you the powder may lie hidden?"

"Are there any vaults beneath the parliament-house?" demanded James, trembling. "Heaven save us! We have often walked there—perhaps over a secret mine."

"There are," replied Salisbury; "and I am again indebted to your majesty for a most important suggestion. Not a corner in the vaults shall be left unsearched. But perhaps you will think with me, that, in order to catch these traitors in their own trap, it will be well to defer the search till the very night before the meeting of parliament."

"I was about to recommend such a course myself, Salisbury," replied James.

"I was sure you would think so," returned the earl; "and now I must entreat you to dismiss the subject from your thoughts, and to sleep securely; for you may rely upon it (after your majesty's discovery) that the plot shall be fully unravelled."

The significant tone in which the earl uttered the latter part of this speech convinced the king that he knew more of the matter than he cared to confess; and he contented himself with saying, "Well, let it be so. I trust all to you. But I at once divined their purpose—I at once divined it."

The council then broke up, and James laughed and chuckled to himself at the discernment he had displayed. Nor was he less pleased with his minister for the credit given him in the affair. But he took care not to enter the parliament-house.

On the afternoon of Monday, the fourth of November, the Lord Chamberlain, accompanied by the Lords Salisbury and Mounteagle, visited the cellars and vaults beneath the parliament-house. For some time they discovered nothing to excite suspicion. At length, probably at the suggestion of Lord Mounteagle, who, as will be recollected, was acquainted with the situation of the magazine, they proceeded to the cellar, where they found the store of powder; but not meeting with any of the conspirators, as they expected, they disturbed nothing, and went away, reporting the result of their search to the king.

By the recommendation of the Earl of Salisbury, James advised that a guard should be placed near the cellar during the whole of the night, consisting of Topcliffe and a certain number of attendants, and headed by Sir Thomas Knevet, a magistrate of Westminster, upon whose courage and discretion full reliance could be placed. Lord Mounteagle also requested permission to keep guard with them to witness the result of the affair. To this the king assented, and as soon as it grew dark, the party secretly took up their position at a point commanding the entrance to the magazine.

Fawkes, who chanced to be absent at the time the search was made, returned a few minutes afterwards, and remained within the cellar, seated upon a barrel of gunpowder, the head of which he had staved, with a lantern in one hand, and petronel in the other, till past midnight. The fifth of November was now at hand, and the clock of the adjoining abbey had scarcely ceased tolling the hour that proclaimed its arrival, when Fawkes, somewhat wearied with his solitary watching, determined to repair, for a short space, to the adjoining house. He accordingly quitted the cellar, leaving his lantern lighted within it in one corner.

Opening the door, he gazed cautiously around, but perceivin

nothing, after waiting a few seconds, he proceeded to lock the door. While thus employed, he thought he heard a noise behind him, and turning suddenly, he beheld through the gloom several persons rushing towards him, evidently with hostile intent. His first impulse was to draw a petronel and grasp his sword; but before he could effect his purpose, his arms were pinioned by a powerful grasp from behind, while the light of a lantern thrown full in his face revealed the barrel of a petronel levelled at his head, and an authoritative voice commanded him in the king's name to surrender.

CHAPTER XIII.—THE FLIGHT OF THE CONSPIRATORS.

ON the same night and at the same hour that Guy Fawkes was captured, the other conspirators held their rendezvous in Lincoln's Inn Walks. A presentiment of the fate awaiting them filled the breasts of all, and even Catesby shared in the general depression. Plan after plan was proposed, and, as soon as proposed, rejected; and they seemed influenced only by alarm and irresolution. Feeling at length that nothing could be done, and that they were only increasing their risk by remaining together longer, they agreed to separate, appointing to meet at the same place on the following night, if their project should not in the interim be discovered.

"Before daybreak," said Catesby, "I will proceed to the cellar under the parliament-house, and ascertain whether anything has happened to Guy Fawkes. My heart misgives me about him, and I reproach myself that I have allowed him to incur this peril alone."

"Guy Fawkes is arrested," said a voice near them, "and is at this moment under an examination before the king."

"It is Tresham who speaks," cried Catesby; "secure him!"

The injunction was instantly obeyed. Tresham was seized, and several weapons pointed against his breast. He did not, however, appear to be dismayed, but, so far as could be discerned in the obscurity, seemed to maintain great boldness of demeanour.

"I have again ventured among you at the hazard of my life," he said, in a firm tone, "to give you this most important intelligence; and am requited, as I have ever been of late, with menaces and violence. Stab me, and see whether my death will avail you in this extremity. I am in equal danger with yourselves; and whether I perish by your hands, or by those of the executioner, is of little moment."

"Let me question him before we avenge ourselves upon him," said Catesby to Rookwood. "How do you know that Guy Fawkes is a prisoner?"

"I saw him taken," replied Tresham, "and esteem myself singularly fortunate that I escaped the same fate. Though excluded from further share in the project, I could not divest myself of a strong desire to know how matters were going on, and I resolved to visit the cellar secretly at midnight. As I stealthily approached it, I remarked several armed figures beneath a gateway, and conjecturing their purpose, instantly concealed myself behind a projection of the wall. I had not been in this situation many minutes, when the cellar door opened and Guy Fawkes issued from it."

"Well!" cried Catesby, breathlessly.

"The party I had noticed immediately rushed forward, and secured him before he could offer any resistance," continued Tresham. "After a brief struggle, certain of their number dragged him into the cellar, while others kept watch without. I should now have flown, but my limbs refused their office, and I was therefore compelled, however reluctantly, to see the end of it. In a short time Guy Fawkes was brought forth again, and I heard some one in authority give directions that he should be instantly taken to Whitehall, to be interrogated before the king and the privy council. He was then led away, and a guard placed at the door of the cellar. Feeling certain I should be discovered, I continued for some time in an agony of apprehension, not daring to stir. But at length, summoning up sufficient resolution, I crept cautiously along the side of the wall, and got off unperceived. My first object was to warn you."

"How did you become acquainted with our place of rendezvous?" demanded the elder Wright.

"I overheard you, at our last interview at White Webbs, appoint a midnight meeting in this place," replied Tresham, "and I hurried hither in the hope of finding you, and have not been disappointed."

"When I give the word, plunge your swords into his breast," said Catesby, in a low tone.

"Hold!" cried Percy, taking him aside. "If we put him to death in this spot, his body will be found, and his slaughter may awaken suspicions against us. Guy Fawkes will reveal nothing."

"Of that I am well assured," said Catesby. "Shall we take the traitor with us to some secure retreat, where we can detain him till we learn what takes place at the palace, and if we find he has betrayed us, despatch him?"

"That would answer no good purpose," returned Percy. "The sooner we are rid of him the better. We can then deliberate as to what is best to be done."

"You are right," rejoined Catesby. "If he *has* betrayed us, life will be a burden to him, and the greatest kindness we could render him would be to rid him of it. Let him go. Tresham," he added, in a loud voice, "you are free. But we meet no more."

"We have not parted yet," cried the traitor, springing backwards, and uttering a loud cry. "I arrest you all in the king's name."

The signal was answered by a band of soldiers, who emerged from behind the trees where they had hitherto been concealed, and instantly surrounded the conspirators.

"It is now my turn to threaten," laughed Tresham.

Catesby replied by drawing a petronel, and firing it in the supposed direction of the speaker. But he missed his mark. The ball lodged in the brain of a soldier who was standing beside him, and the ill-fated wretch fell to the ground. A desperate conflict now ensued. Topcliffe, who commanded the assailing party, ordered his followers to take the conspirators alive, and it was mainly owing to this injunction that the latter were indebted for their safety. Whispering his directions to his companions, Catesby gave the word, and making a simultaneous rush forward, they broke through the opposing ranks, and instantly disappearing, and favoured by the gloom, they baffled pursuit.

"We have failed in this part of our scheme," said Tresham to Topcliffe, as they met half an hour afterwards. "What is to be done?"

"We must take the Earl of Salisbury's advice upon it," returned Topcliffe. "I shall now hasten to Whitehall to see how Guy Fawkes's interrogation proceeds, and will communicate with his lordship." Upon this they separated.

None of the conspirators met again that night. Each fled in a different direction, and, ignorant of what had happened to the rest, sought some secure retreat. Catesby ran towards Chancery-lane, and, passing through a narrow alley, entered the large gardens which then lay between this thoroughfare and Fetter-lane. Listening to hear whether he was pursued, and finding nothing to alarm him, he threw himself on a sod beneath a tree, and was lost in painful reflection.

"All my fair schemes are marred by that traitor, Tresham," he muttered. "I could forgive myself for being duped by him, if I had slain him when he was in my power. But that he should escape to exult in our ruin, and reap the reward of his perfidy, afflicts me even more than failure."

Tortured by thoughts like these, and in vain endeavouring to snatch such brief repose as would fit him for the fatigue he might have to endure on the morrow, he did not quit his position till late in the morning of a dull November day—it was, as will be recollected, the memorable Fifth—had arrived. He then arose, and slouching his hat, and wrapping his cloak around him, shaped his course towards Fleet-street. From the knots of persons gathered together at different corners, from their muttered discourse and mysterious looks, as well as from the general excitement that prevailed, he felt sure that some rumour of the plot had gone abroad. Shunning observation as much as he could, he entered a small tavern near Fleet-bridge, and called for a flask of wine and some food. While discussing these, he was attracted by the discourse of the landlord, who was conversing with his guests about the conspiracy.

"I hear that all the Papists are to be hanged, drawn, and quartered," cried the host; "and if it be true, as I have heard, that this plot is their contrivance, they deserve it. I hope I have no believer in that faith—no recusant in my house."

"Don't insult us by any such suspicion," cried one of the guests. "We are all loyal men—all good Protestants."

"Do you know whether the conspirators have been discovered, sir?" asked the host of Catesby.

"I do not even know of the plot," replied the other. "What was its object?"

"What was its object!" cried the host. "You will scarcely credit me when I tell you. I tremble to speak of it. Its object was to blow up the parliament-house, and the king and all the nobles and prelates of the land along with it."

"Horrible!" exclaimed the guests.

"But how do you know it is a scheme of the Papists?" asked Catesby.

"Because I have been told so," rejoined the host. "But who else could devise such a monstrous plan? It would never enter into the head or heart of a Protestant to conceive so detestable an action. We

love our king too well for that, and would shed the last drop of our blood rather than a hair of his head should be injured. But these priest-ridden Papists think otherwise. They regard him as an usurper; and having received a dispensation from the Pope to that effect, fancy it would be a pious act to remove him. There will be no tranquillity in the kingdom while one of them is left alive; and I hope his majesty will take advantage of the present ferment to order a general massacre of them, like that of the poor Protestants on Saint Bartholomew's-day in Paris."

"Ay—massacre them," cried the guests; "that's the way. Burn their houses and cut their throats. Will it be lawful to do so without further authority, mine host? If so, we will set about it immediately."

"I cannot resolve you on that point," replied the landlord. "You had better wait a short time. I dare say their slaughter will be publicly commanded."

"Heaven grant it may be so," cried one of the guests. "I will bear my part in the business."

Catesby arose, paid his reckoning, and strode out of the tavern.

"Do you know, mine host," said the guest who had last spoken, "I half suspect that tall fellow who has just left us is a Papist."

"Perhaps a conspirator," said another.

"Let us watch him," cried a third.

"Stay," cried the host; "he has paid me double my reckoning. I believe him to be an honest man and a good Protestant."

"What you say confirms my suspicions," rejoined the first speaker.

"We will follow him."

On reaching Temple Bar, Catesby found the gates closed, and a guard stationed at them, no one being allowed to pass through without examination. Not willing to expose himself to this scrutiny, Catesby turned away, and, in doing so, perceived three of the persons he had just left in the tavern. The expression of their countenances satisfied him they were dogging him; but, affecting not to perceive it, he retraced his steps, gradually quickening his pace until he reached a narrow street leading into Whitefriars, down which he darted. The moment his pursuers saw this, they hurried after him, shouting, "A Papist!—a Papist!—a conspirator!"

But Catesby was now safe. Claiming the protection of certain Alsatians who were lounging at the door of a tavern, and offering to reward them, they instantly drew their swords, and drove the others away, while Catesby, tossing a few pieces of money to his preservers, passed through a small doorway into the Temple, and, making the best of his way to the stairs, leaped into a boat, and ordered the waterman to row to Westminster. The man obeyed, and, plying his oars, soon gained the middle of the stream. Little way, however, had been made, when Catesby descried a large wherry, manned by several rowers, swiftly approaching them, and, instinctively comprehending whom it contained, ordered the man to rest on his oars till it had passed.

In a few moments the wherry approached them. It was filled with *sergeants of the guard and halberdiers*, in the midst of whom sat *Guy Fawkes*. Catesby could not resist the impulse that prompted him to rise, and the movement attracted the attention of the prisoner. The

momentary glance they exchanged convinced Catesby that Fawkes perceived him, though his motionless features gave no token of recognition, and he immediately afterwards fixed his eyes towards heaven, as if to intimate—at least, Catesby so construed the gesture—that his earthly career was well-nigh ended. Heaving a deep sigh, Catesby watched the wherry sweep on towards the Tower—its fatal destination—until it was lost to view.

“All is over, I fear, with the bravest of our band,” he thought, as he tracked its course; “but some effort must be made to save him. At all events we will die sword in hand, and like soldiers, and not as common malefactors.”

Abandoning his intention of proceeding to Westminster, he desired the man to pull ashore, and, landing at Arundel Stairs, hastened to the Strand. Here he found large crowds collected, the shops closed, and business completely at a stand. Nothing was talked of but the conspiracy, and the most exaggerated and extraordinary accounts of it were circulated and believed. Some would have it that the parliament-house was already blown up, and that the city of London itself had been set fire to in several places by the Papists. It was also stated that numerous arrests had taken place, and it was certain that the houses of several Catholic nobles and wealthy gentlemen had been searched. To such a height was the popular indignation raised, that it required the utmost efforts of the soldiery to prevent the mob from breaking into these houses, and using violence towards their inmates.

Every gate and avenue to the palace was strictly guarded, and troops of horse were continually scouring the streets. Sentinels were placed before suspected houses, and no one was suffered to enter them, or to go forth, without special permission. Detachments of soldiery were also stationed at the end of all the main thoroughfares. Bars were thrown across the smaller streets and outlets, and proclamation was made that no one was to quit the city, however urgent his business, for three days.

On hearing this announcement, Catesby saw at once that if he did not effect his escape immediately, it would be impracticable. Accordingly, he hurried towards Charing Cross, and, turning up Saint Martin's-lane, at the back of the King's Mews, contrived to elude the vigilance of the guard, and speeded along the lane—for it was then literally so, and surrounded on either side by high hedges—until he came to St. Giles's, at this time nothing more than a few scattered houses, intermixed with trees. Here he encountered a man mounted on a powerful steed, and, seeing this person look hard at him, would have drawn out of the way, if the other had not addressed him by name. He then regarded the equestrian more narrowly, and found it was Martin Heydocke.

“I have heard what has happened, Mr. Catesby,” said Martin, “and can imagine the desperate strait in which you must be placed. Take my horse; it may aid your flight. I was sent to London by my master, Mr. Humphrey Chetham, to bring him intelligence of the result of your attempt; and I am sure I am acting in accordance with his wishes in rendering you such a service. At all events, I will risk it. Mount, sir, mount, and make the best of your way hence.”

Catesby needed no further exhortation, but, springing into the saddle,

hastily murmured his thanks, and striking into a lane on the right, rode off at a swift pace towards Highgate. On reaching the brow of this beautiful hill, he drew in the bridle for a moment, and gazed towards the city he had just quitted. Dark and bitter were his thoughts as he fixed his eye upon Westminster Abbey, and fancied he could discern the neighbouring pile whose destruction he had meditated. Remembering that from this very spot, when he had last approached the capital, in company with Guy Fawkes and Viviana Radcliffe, he had looked in the same direction, he could not help contrasting his present sensations with those he had then experienced. At that time he was full of ardour, and confident of success. Now, all was lost to him, and he was anxious for little more than self-preservation. Involuntarily, his eye wandered along the great city, until, passing over the mighty fabric of Saint Paul's, it settled upon the Tower—upon the place of Guy Fawkes's captivity.

"And can nothing be done for his deliverance?" sighed Catesby, as he turned away, his eyes filling with moisture. "Must that brave soldier die the death of a felon—must he be subjected to the torture—horror! If he had died defending himself, I should hardly have pitied him. And if he had destroyed himself together with his foes, as he resolved to do, I should have envied him. But the idea of what he will have to suffer in that dreadful place—nay, what he is now, perhaps, suffering—makes the life-blood curdle in my veins. I will never fall alive into their hands."

With this resolve, he struck spurs into his steed, and urging him to a swift pace, dashed rapidly forward. He had ridden more than a mile, when, hearing shouts behind him, he perceived two troopers galloping after him as fast as their horses could carry them. They shouted to him to stay, and as they were better mounted than he was, it was evident they would soon come up with him. Determined, however, to adhere to the resolution he had just formed, and not to yield himself with life, he prepared for a conflict, and, suddenly halting, he concealed a petronel beneath his cloak, and waited till his foes drew near.

"I command you in the king's name to surrender," said the foremost trooper, riding up. "You are a rebel and a traitor."

"Be this my answer," replied Catesby, aiming at the man, and firing with such certainty, that he fell from his horse mortally wounded. Unsheathing his sword, he then prepared to attack the other trooper. But, terrified at the fate of his comrade, the man turned his horse's head, and rode off.

Without bestowing a thought on the dying man, who lay groaning in the mire, Catesby caught hold of the bridle of his horse, and satisfied that the animal was better than his own, mounted him, and proceeded at the same headlong pace as before. In a short time he reached Finchley, where several persons rushed from their dwellings to inquire whether he brought any intelligence of the plot, rumours of which had already reached them. Without stopping, Catesby replied that most important discoveries had been made, and that he was carrying despatches from the king to Northampton. No opposition was therefore offered him, and he soon left all traces of habitation behind him. Urging his horse to its utmost, he arrived in less than a quarter of an hour at Chipping Barnet. Here the same inquiries were made as

Finchley, and returning the same answer—for he never relaxed his speed for a moment—he pursued his course.

In less than three-quarters of an hour after this he arrived at Saint Albans, and, proceeding direct to the post-house, asked for a horse. But instead of complying with the request, the landlord of the Rose and Crown—such was the name of the hostel—instantly withdrew, and returned the next moment with an officer, who desired to speak with Catesby before he proceeded further. The latter, however, took no notice of the demand, but rode off.

The clatter of horses' hoofs behind him soon convinced him he was again pursued, and he was just beginning to consider in what way he should make a second defence, when he observed two horsemen cross a lane on the left, and make for the main road. His situation now appeared highly perilous, especially as his pursuers, who had noticed the other horsemen at the same time as himself, shouted to them. But he was speedily relieved. These persons, instead of stopping, accelerated their pace, and appeared as anxious as he was to avoid those behind him. They were now within a short distance of Dunstable, and were ascending the lovely downs which lie on the London side of this ancient town, when one of the horsemen in front chancing to turn round, Catesby perceived it was Rookwood. Overjoyed at the discovery, he shouted to him at the top of his voice, and the other, who it presently appeared was accompanied by Keyes, instantly stopped. In a few seconds Catesby was by their side, and a rapid explanation taking place, they all three drew up in order of battle.

By this time their pursuers had arrived within a hundred yards of them, and seeing how matters stood, and not willing to hazard an engagement, after a brief consultation retired. The three friends then pursued their route, passed through Dunstable, and without pausing a moment on the road, soon neared Fenny Stratford. Just before they arrived at this place Catesby's horse fell from exhaustion. Instantly extricating himself from the fallen animal, he ran by the side of his companions till they got to the town, where Rookwood, who had placed relays on the road, changed his horse, and the others were fortunate enough to procure fresh steeds.

Proceeding with unabated impetuosity, they soon cleared a few more miles, and had just left Stony Stratford behind them, when they overtook a solitary horseman, who proved to be John Wright, and a little further on they came up with Percy and Christopher Wright. Though their numbers were thus increased, they did not consider themselves secure, but flinging their cloaks away, to enable them to proceed with greater expedition, hurried on to Towcester. Here Keyes quitted his companions, and shaped his course into Warwickshire, where he was afterwards taken, while the others, having procured fresh horses, made the best of their way to Ashby Saint Leger's.

About six o'clock Catesby and his companions arrived at his old family seat, which he had expected to approach in triumph, but which he now approached with feelings of the deepest mortification and disappointment. They found the house filled with guests, among whom was Robert Winter, who were just sitting down to supper. Catesby rushed into the room in which these persons were assembled, covered with mud and dirt—his haggard looks and dejected appearance

proclaiming that his project had failed. His friends followed, and their appearance confirmed the impression that he had produced. Lady Catesby hastened to her son, and strove to comfort him, but he rudely repulsed her.

"What is the matter?" she anxiously inquired.

"What is the matter?" cried Catesby, in a furious tone, and stamping his foot to the ground. "All is lost! our scheme is discovered; Guy Fawkes is a prisoner, and ere long we shall all be led to the block. Yes, all," he repeated, gazing sternly around.

"I will never be led thither with life," said Robert Winter.

"Nor I," added a young Catholic gentleman, named Acton of Ribbesford, who had lately joined the conspiracy. "Though the great design has failed, we are yet free, and have swords to draw, and arms to wield them."

"Ay," exclaimed Robert Winter, "all our friends are assembled at Dunchurch. Let us join them instantly, and we may yet stir up a rebellion which may accomplish all we can desire. I, myself, accompanied Humphrey Littleton to Dunchurch this morning, and know we shall find everything in readiness."

"Do not despair," cried Lady Catesby; "all will yet be well. Every member of our faith will join you, and you will soon muster a formidable army."

"We must not yield without a blow," cried Percy, pouring out a bumper of wine, and swallowing it at a draught.

"You are right," said Rookwood, imitating his example. "We will sell our lives dearly."

"If you will adhere to this resolution, gentlemen," rejoined Catesby, "we may yet retrieve our loss. With five hundred staunch followers, who will stand by me to the last, I will engage to raise such a rebellion in England as shall not be checked, except by the acknowledgment of our rights, or the dethronement of the king."

"We will all stand by you," cried the others.

"Swear it," cried Catesby, raising the glass to his lips.

"We do," was the reply.

"Wearied as we are," cried Catesby, "we must at once proceed to Dunchurch, and urge our friends to rise in arms with us."

"Agreed," cried the others.

Summoning all his household, and arming them, Catesby then set out with the rest for Dunchurch, which lay about five miles from Ashby Saint Leger's. They arrived there in about three-quarters of an hour, and found the mansion crowded with Catholic gentlemen and their servants. Entering the banquet-hall, they found Sir Everard Digby at the head of the board, with Garnet on his right hand. Upwards of sixty persons were seated at the table. Their arrival was greeted with loud shouts, and several of the guests drew their swords and flourished them over their heads.

"What news?" cried Sir Everard Digby. "Is the blow struck?"

"No," replied Catesby; "we have been betrayed."

A deep silence prevailed. A change came over the countenances of the guests. Significant glances were exchanged, and it was evident that general uneasiness prevailed.

"What is to be done?" cried Sir Everard Digby, after a pause.

"Our course is clear," returned Catesby. "We must stand by each other. In that case, we have nothing to fear, and shall accomplish our purpose, though not in the way originally intended."

"I will have nothing further to do with the matter," said Sir Robert Digby of Coleshill, Sir Everard's uncle; and rising, he quitted the room with several of his followers, while his example was imitated by Humphrey Littleton and others.

"All chance for the restoration of our faith in England is over," observed Garnet, in a tone of despondency.

"Not so, father," replied Catesby, "if we are true to each other. My friends," he cried, stopping those who were about to depart, "in the name of our holy religion I beseech you to pause. Much is against us now. But let us hold together, and all will speedily be righted. Every Catholic in this country, in Cheshire, in Lancashire, and Wales, must flock to our standard when it is once displayed. Do not desert us—do not desert yourselves—for our cause is your cause. I have a large force at my command; so has Sir Everard Digby, and together we can muster nearly five hundred adherents. With these, we can offer such a stand as will enable us to make conditions with our opponents, or even to engage with them with a reasonable prospect of success. I am well assured, moreover, if we lose no time, but proceed to the houses of our friends, we shall have a large army with us. Do not fall off then. On you depends our success."

This address was followed by loud acclamations, and all who heard it agreed to stand by the cause in which they had embarked to the last. As Catesby left the banqueting-hall with Sir Everard, to make preparations for their departure, they met Viviana and a female attendant.

"I hear the enterprise has failed," she cried, in a voice suffocated by emotion. "What has happened to my husband? Is he safe? Is he with you?"

"Alas! no," replied Catesby; "he is a prisoner."

Viviana uttered a cry of anguish, and fell senseless into the arms of the attendant.

CHAPTER XIV.—THE EXAMINATION.

DISARMED by Sir Thomas Knevet and his followers, who found upon his person a packet of slow matches and touchwood, and bound hand and foot, Guy Fawkes was dragged into the cellar by his captors, who instantly commenced their search. In a corner behind the door they discovered a dark lantern, with a light burning within it; and moving with the utmost caution—for they were afraid of bringing sudden destruction upon themselves—they soon perceived the barrels of gun-powder ranged against the wall. Carefully removing the planks, billets, and iron bars with which they were covered, they remarked that two of the casks were staved in, while the hoops from a third were taken off, and the powder scattered around it. They also noticed that several trains were laid along the floor—everything, in short, *betokening that the preparations for the desperate deed were fully completed.*

While they were making this investigation, Guy Fawkes, who, seeing that further resistance was useless, had remained perfectly

motionless up to this moment, suddenly made a struggle to free himself; and so desperate was the effort, that he burst the leathern thong that bound his hands, and seizing the soldier nearest to him, bore him to the ground. He then grasped the lower limbs of another, who held a lantern, and strove to overthrow him, and wrest the lantern from his grasp, evidently intending to apply the light to the powder. And he would unquestionably have executed his terrible design, if three of the most powerful of the soldiers had not thrown themselves upon him, and overpowered him. All this was the work of a moment, but it was so startling, that Sir Thomas Knevet and Topcliffe, though both courageous men, and used to scenes of danger—especially the latter—rushed towards the door, expecting some dreadful catastrophe would take place.

"Do him no harm," cried Knevet, as he returned to the soldiers, who were still struggling with Fawkes; "do him no harm. It is not here he must die."

"A moment more, and I had blown you all to perdition," cried Fawkes. "But Heaven ordained it otherwise."

"Heaven will never assist such damnable designs as yours," rejoined Knevet. "Thrust him into that corner," he added to his men, who instantly obeyed his injunctions, and held down the prisoner so firmly that he could not move a limb. "Keep him there. I will question him presently."

"You *may* question me," replied Fawkes, sternly, "but you will obtain no answer."

"We shall see," returned Knevet.

Pursuing the search with Topcliffe, he counted thirty-six hogsheads and casks of various sizes, all of which were afterwards found to be filled with powder. Though prepared for this discovery, Knevet could not repress his horror at it, and gave vent to execrations against the prisoner, to which the other replied by a disdainful laugh. They then looked about, in the hope of finding some document or fragment of a letter, which might serve as a clue to the other parties connected with the fell design, but without success. Nothing was found except a pile of arms; but though they examined them, no name or cipher could be traced on any of the weapons.

"We will now examine the prisoner more narrowly," said Knevet.

This was accordingly done. On removing Guy Fawkes's doublet, a horse-hair shirt appeared, and underneath it, next his heart, suspended by a silken cord from his neck, was a small silver cross. When this was taken from him, Guy Fawkes could not repress a deep sigh.

"There is some secret attached to that cross," whispered Topcliffe, plucking Knevet's sleeve.

Upon this the other held it to the light, while Topcliffe kept his eye fixed upon the prisoner, and observed that, in spite of all his efforts to preserve an unmoved demeanour, he was slightly agitated.

"Do you perceive anything?" he asked.

"Yes," replied Knevet, "there is a name. But the character is so small I cannot decipher it."

"Let me look at it," said Topcliffe. "This is most important," he added, after gazing at it for a moment; "the words inscribed on it are, '*Viviana Radcliffe, Ordsall Hall.*' You may remember that th

young lady was examined, a short time ago, on suspicion of being connected with some Popish plot against the state, and committed to the Tower, whence she escaped in a very extraordinary manner. This cross, found upon the prisoner, proves her connexion with the present plot. Every effort must be used to discover her retreat."

Another deep sigh involuntarily broke from the breast of Guy Fawkes.

"You hear how deeply interested he is in the matter," observed Topcliffe, in a low tone. "This trinket will be of infinite service to us in future examinations, and may do more for us with this stubborn subject even than the rack itself."

"You are right," returned Knevet. "I will now convey him to Whitehall, and acquaint the Earl of Salisbury with his capture."

"Do so," replied Topcliffe. "I have a further duty to perform. Before morning I hope to net the whole of this wolfish pack."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Knevet. "Have you any knowledge of the others?" Topcliffe smiled significantly.

"Time will show," he said. "But if you do not require me further, I will leave you."

With this, he quitted the cellar, and joined the Earl of Mounteagle and Tresham, who were waiting for him outside at a little distance from the cellar. After a brief conference, it was arranged, in compliance with the Earl of Salisbury's wishes, that if they failed in entrapping the conspirators, nothing should be said about the matter. He then departed with Tresham. The subsequent proceedings have already been related.

By Sir Thomas Knevet's directions, Guy Fawkes was now raised by two of the soldiers, and led out of the cellar. As he passed through the door, he uttered a deep groan.

"You groan for what you have done, villain," said one of the soldiers.

"On the contrary," rejoined Fawkes, sternly, "I groan for what I have not done."

He was then hurried along by his conductors, and conveyed through the great western gate into the palace of Whitehall, where he was placed in a small room, the windows of which were strongly grated. Before quitting him, Sir Thomas Knevet put several questions to him, but he maintained a stern and obstinate silence. Committing him to the custody of an officer of the guard, whom he enjoined to keep strict guard over him, as he valued his life, Knevet then went in search of the Earl of Salisbury.

The secretary, who had not retired to rest, and was anxiously awaiting his arrival, was delighted with the success of the scheme. They were presently joined by Lord Mounteagle; and after a brief conference it was resolved to summon the privy council immediately, to rouse the king, and acquaint him with what had occurred, and to interrogate the prisoner in his presence.

"Nothing will be obtained from him, I fear," said Knevet. "He is one of the most resolute and determined fellows I ever encountered."

And he then related the desperate attempt made by Fawkes in the vault to blow them all up.

"Whether he will speak or not, the king must see him," said

Salisbury. As soon as Knevet was gone, the earl observed to Mounteagle, "You had now better leave the palace. You must not appear further in this matter, except as we have arranged. Before morning, I trust we shall have the whole of the conspirators in our power, with damning proofs of their guilt."

"By this time, my lord, they are in Tresham's hands," replied Mounteagle.

"If he fails, not a word must be said," observed Salisbury. "It must not be supposed we have moved in the matter. All great statesmen have contrived treasons, that they might afterwards discover them; and though I have not contrived this plot, I have known of its existence from the first, and could at any time have crushed it had I been so minded. But that would not have answered my purpose. And I shall now use it as a pretext to crush the whole Catholic party, except those on whom, like yourself, I can confidently rely."

"Your lordship must admit that I have well seconded your efforts," observed Mounteagle.

"I do so," replied Salisbury; "and you will not find me ungrateful. Farewell! I hope soon to hear of our further success."

Mounteagle then took his departure, and Salisbury immediately caused all such members of the privy council as lodged in the palace to be aroused, desiring they might be informed that a terrible plot had been discovered, and a conspirator arrested. In a short time, the Duke of Lennox, the Earl of Marr, Lord Hume, the Earl of Southampton, Lord Henry Howard, Lord Mountjoy, Sir George Hume, and others, were assembled; and all eagerly inquired into the occasion of the sudden alarm. Meanwhile the Earl of Salisbury had himself repaired to the king's bedchamber, and acquainted him with what had happened. James immediately roused himself, and desired the chamberlain, who accompanied the earl, to quit the presence.

"Will it be safe to interrogate the prisoner here?" he asked.

"I will take care your majesty shall receive no injury," replied Salisbury; "and it is absolutely necessary you should examine him before he is committed to the Tower."

"Let him be brought before me, then, directly," said the king. "I am impatient to behold a wretch who has conceived so atrocious—so infernal a design against me, and against my children. Hark'e, Salisbury, one caution I wish to observe. Let a captain of the guard, with his drawn sword in hand, place himself between me and the prisoner, and let two halberdiers stand beside him, and, if the villain moves a step, bid them strike him dead. You understand?"

"Perfectly," replied Salisbury, bowing.

"In that case, you may take off his bonds—that is, if you think it prudent to do so—not otherwise," continued James. "I would not have the knave suppose he can awe me."

"Your majesty's commands shall be fulfilled to the letter," returned the earl.

"Lose no time, Salisbury," cried James, springing out of bed, and beginning to dress himself without the assistance of his chamberlain.

The earl hastily retired, and ordered the attendants to repair to their royal master. He next proceeded to the chamber where Guy Fawkes was detained, and ordered him to be unbound, and brought before the

king. When the prisoner heard this mandate, a slight smile crossed his countenance, but he instantly resumed his former stern composure. The smile, however, did not escape the notice of Salisbury, and he commanded the halberdiers to keep near to the prisoner, and, if he made the slightest movement in the king's presence, instantly to despatch him.

Giving some further directions, the earl then led the way across a court, and entering another wing of the palace, ascended a flight of steps, and traversed a magnificent corridor. Guy Fawkes followed, attended by the guard. They had now reached the ante-chamber leading to the royal sleeping apartment, and Salisbury ascertained from the officers in attendance that all was in readiness. Motioning the guard to remain where they were, he entered the inner room alone, and found James seated on a chair of state near the bed, surrounded by his council; the Earl of Marr standing on his right hand, and the Duke of Lennox on his left, all anxiously awaiting his arrival. Behind the king were stationed half-a-dozen halberdiers.

"The prisoner is without," said Salisbury. "Is it your majesty's pleasure that he be admitted?"

"Ay, let him come in forthwith," replied James. "Stand by me, my lords. And do you, varlets, keep a wary eye upon him. There is no saying what he may attempt."

Salisbury then waved his hand. The door was thrown open, and an officer entered the room, followed by Guy Fawkes, who marched between two halberdiers. When within a couple of yards of the king, the officer halted, and withdrew a little on the right, so as to allow full view of the prisoner, while he extended his sword between him and the king. Nothing could be more undaunted than the looks and demeanour of Fawkes. He strode firmly into the room, and, without making any reverence, folded his arms upon his breast, and looked sternly at James.

"A bold villain!" cried the king, as he regarded him with curiosity not unmixed with alarm. "Who, and what are you, traitor?"

"A conspirator," replied Fawkes.

"That I know," rejoined James, sharply. "But how are you called?"

"John Johnson," answered Fawkes. "I am servant to Mr. Thomas Percy."

"That is false," cried Salisbury. "Take heed that you speak the truth, traitor, or the rack shall force it from you."

"The rack will force nothing from me," replied Fawkes, sternly; "neither will I answer any question asked by your lordship."

"Leave him to me, Salisbury—leave him to me," interposed James. "And it was your hellish design to blow us all up with gunpowder?" he demanded.

"It was," replied Fawkes.

"And how could you resolve to destroy so many persons, none of whom have injured you?" pursued James.

"Dangerous diseases require desperate remedies," replied Fawkes.

"Milder means have been tried, but without effect. It was God's pleasure that this scheme, which was for the benefit of His holy religion, should not prosper, and therefore I do not repine at the result."

"And are you so blinded as to suppose that Heaven can approve the

actions of him who raises his hand against the king—against the Lord's anointed?" cried James.

"He is no king who is excommunicated by the apostolic see," replied Fawkes.

"This to our face!" cried James, angrily. "Have you no remorse—no compunction for what you have done?"

"My sole regret is that I have failed," replied Fawkes.

"You will not speak thus confidently on the rack," said James.

"Try me," replied Fawkes.

"What purpose did you hope to accomplish by this atrocious design?" demanded the Earl of Marr.

"My main purpose was to blow back the beggarly Scots to their native mountains," returned Fawkes.

"This audacity surpasses belief," said James. "Mutius Scævola, when in the presence of Porsenna, was not more resolute. Hark'e, villain, if I give you your life will you disclose the names of your associates?"

"No," replied Fawkes.

"They shall be wrung from you," cried Salisbury.

Fawkes smiled contemptuously. "You know me not," he said.

"It is idle to interrogate him further," said James. "Let him be removed to the Tower."

"Be it so," returned Salisbury; "and when next your majesty questions him, I trust it will be in the presence of his confederates."

"Despite the villain's horrible intent, I cannot help admiring his courage," observed James, in a low tone; "and were he as loyal as he is brave, he should always be near our person."

With this, he waved his hand, and Guy Fawkes was led forth. He was detained by the Earl of Salisbury's orders till the morning—it being anticipated that before that time the other conspirators would be arrested. But as this was not the case, he was placed in a wherry, and conveyed, as before related, to the Tower.

Book III.—The Conspirators.

CHAPTER I.—HOW GUY FAWKES WAS PUT TO THE TORTURE.

INTIMATION of the arrest of Guy Fawkes having been sent to the Tower, his arrival was anxiously expected by the warders and soldiers composing the garrison, a crowd of whom posted themselves at the entrance of Traitor's Gate, to obtain a sight of him. As the bark that conveyed the prisoner shot through London Bridge, and neared the fortress, notice of its approach was given to the lieutenant, who, scarcely less impatient, had stationed himself in a small circular chamber in one of the turrets of Saint Thomas's or Traitor's Tower, overlooking the river. He hastily descended, and had scarcely reached the place of disembarkation, when the boat passed beneath the gloomy archway; the immense wooden wicket closed behind it; and the officer in command *springing ashore, was followed more deliberately by Fawkes, who mounted the slippery stairs with a firm footstep. As he gained the summit, the spectators pressed forward; but Sir William Waad, orde*

ing them in an authoritative tone to stand back, fixed a stern and scrutinising glance on the prisoner.

"Many vile traitors have ascended those steps," he said, "but none so false-hearted, none so bloodthirsty as you."

"None ever ascended them with less misgiving, or with less self-reproach," replied Fawkes.

"Miserable wretch! Do you glory in your villany?" cried the lieutenant. "If anything could heighten my detestation of the pernicious creed you profess, it would be to witness its effects on such minds as yours. What a religion must that be, which can induce its followers to commit such monstrous actions, and delude them into the belief that they are pious and praiseworthy!"

"It is a religion, at least, that supports them at seasons when they most require it," rejoined Fawkes.

"Peace!" cried the lieutenant, fiercely, "or I will have your viperous tongue torn out by the roots."

Turning to the officer, he demanded his warrant, and glancing at it, gave some directions to one of the warders, and then resumed his scrutiny of Fawkes, who appeared wholly unmoved, and steadily returned his gaze.

Meanwhile, several of the spectators, eager to prove their loyalty to the king and abhorrence of the plot, loaded the prisoner with execrations, and finding these produced no effect, proceeded to personal outrage. Some spat upon his face and garments; some threw mud, gathered from the slimy steps, upon him; some pricked him with the points of their halberds; while others, if they had not been checked, would have resorted to greater violence. Only one bystander expressed the slightest commiseration for him. It was Ruth Ipgreve, who, with her parents, formed part of the assemblage.

A few kindly words pronounced by this girl moved the prisoner more than all the insults he had just experienced. He said nothing, but a slight and almost imperceptible quivering of the lip told what was passing within. The gaoler was extremely indignant at his daughter's conduct, fearing it might prejudice him in the eyes of the lieutenant.

"Get hence, girl," he cried, "and stir not from thy room for the rest of the day. I am sorry I allowed thee to come forth."

"You must look to her, Jasper Ipgreve," said Sir William Waad, sternly. "No man shall hold an office in the Tower who is a favourer of Papacy. If you were a good Protestant, and a faithful servant of King James, your daughter could never have acted thus unbecomingly. Look to her, I say,—and to yourself."

"I will, honourable sir," replied Jasper, in great confusion. "Take her home directly," he added, in an under tone to his wife. "Lock her up till I return, and scourge her if thou wilt. She will ruin us by her indiscretion."

In obedience to this injunction, Dame Ipgreve seized her daughter's hand, and dragged her away. Ruth turned for a moment to take a last look at the prisoner, and saw that his gaze followed her, and was fraught with an expression of the deepest gratitude. By way of showing his disapproval of his daughter's conduct, the gaoler now joined the bitterest of Guy Fawkes's assailants; and ere long the assemblage became infuriated to such an ungovernable pitch, that the lieutenant, who

had allowed matters to proceed thus far in the hope of shaking the prisoner's constancy, finding his design fruitless, ordered him to be taken away. Escorted by a dozen soldiers with calivers on their shoulders, Guy Fawkes was led through the archway of the Bloody Tower, and across the Green to the Beauchamp Tower. He was placed in the spacious chamber on the first floor of that fortification, now used as a mess-room by the Guards. Sir William Waad followed him, and seating himself at a table, referred to the warrant.

"You are here called John Johnson. Is that your name?" he demanded.

"If you find it thus written, you need make no further inquiry from me," replied Fawkes. "I am the person so described. That is sufficient for you."

"Not so," replied the lieutenant; "and if you persist in this stubborn demeanour, the severest measures will be adopted towards you. Your sole chance of avoiding the torture is in making a full confession."

"I do not desire to avoid the torture," replied Fawkes. "It will wrest nothing from me."

"So all think till they have experienced it," replied the lieutenant; "but greater fortitude than yours has given way before our engines."

Fawkes smiled disdainfully, but made no answer.

The lieutenant then gave directions that he should be placed within a small cell adjoining the larger chamber, and that two of the guard should remain constantly beside him, to prevent him from doing himself any violence.

"You need have no fear," observed Fawkes. "I shall not destroy my chance of martyrdom."

At this juncture a messenger arrived, bearing a despatch from the Earl of Salisbury. The lieutenant broke the seal, and after hurriedly perusing it, drew his sword, and desiring the guard to station themselves outside the door, approached Fawkes.

"Notwithstanding the enormity of your offence," he observed, "I find his majesty will graciously spare your life, provided you will reveal the names of all your associates, and disclose every particular connected with the plot."

Guy Fawkes appeared lost in reflection, and the lieutenant, conceiving he had made an impression upon him, repeated the offer.

"How am I to be assured of this?" asked the prisoner.

"My promise must suffice," rejoined Waad.

"It will not suffice for me," returned Fawkes. "I must have a pardon signed by the king."

"You shall have it on one condition," replied Waad. "You are evidently troubled with few scruples. It is the Earl of Salisbury's conviction that the heads of many important Catholic families are connected with this plot. If they should prove to be so—or, to be plain, if you will accuse certain persons whom I will specify, you shall have the pardon you require."

"Is this the purport of the Earl of Salisbury's despatch?" asked Guy Fawkes.

The lieutenant nodded.

"Let me look at it," continued Fawkes. "You may be practising upon me."

"Your own perfidious nature makes you suspicious of treachery in others," cried the lieutenant. "Will this satisfy you?"

And he held the letter towards Guy Fawkes, who instantly snatched it from his grasp.

"What oh!" he shouted, in a loud voice; "what ho!" and the guards instantly rushed into the room. "You shall learn why you were sent away. Sir William Waad has offered me my life, on the part of the Earl of Salisbury, provided I will accuse certain innocent parties—innocent, except that they are Catholics—of being leagued with me in my design. Read this letter, and see whether I speak not the truth."

And he threw it among them. But no one stirred, except a warder, who, picking it up, delivered it to the lieutenant.

"You will now understand whom you have to deal with," pursued Fawkes.

"I do," replied Waad. "But were you as unyielding as the walls of this prison, I would shake your obduracy."

"I pray you not to delay the experiment," said Fawkes.

"Have a little patience," retorted Waad. "I will not baulk your humour, depend upon it."

With this he departed, and, repairing to his lodgings, wrote a hasty despatch to the earl, detailing all that had passed, and requesting a warrant for the torture, as he was apprehensive, if the prisoner expired under the severe application that would be necessary to force the truth from him, he might be called to account. Two hours afterwards the messenger returned with the warrant. It was in the handwriting of the king, and contained a list of interrogations to be put to the prisoner, concluding by directing him "to use the gentler torture first, *et sic per gradus ad ima tenditur*. And so God speed you in your good work!"

Thus armed, and fearless of the consequences, the lieutenant summoned Jasper Ipgreve.

"We have a very refractory prisoner to deal with," he said, as the gaoler appeared. "But I have just received the royal authority to put him through all the degrees of torture if he continues obstinate. How shall we begin?"

"With the Scavenger's Daughter and the Little Ease, if it please you, honourable sir," replied Ipgreve. "If these fail, we can try the gauntlets and the rack; and lastly, the dungeon among the rats, and the hot stone."

"A good progression," said the lieutenant, smiling. "I will now repair to the torture-chamber. Let the prisoner be brought there without delay. He is in the Beauchamp Tower."

Ipgreve bowed and departed, while the lieutenant, calling to an attendant to bring a torch, proceeded along a narrow passage communicating with the Bell Tower. Opening a secret door within it, he descended a flight of stone steps, and traversing a number of intricate passages, at length stopped before a strong door, which he pushed aside, and entered the chamber he had mentioned to Ipgreve. This dismal apartment has already been described. It was that in which Irviana's constancy was so fearfully approved. Two officials, in the sullen garb of the place—a sable livery—were occupied in polishing

the various steel implements. Besides these, there was the surgeon, who was seated at a side table, reading by the light of a brazen lamp. He instantly arose on seeing the lieutenant, and began, with the other officials, to make preparations for the prisoner's arrival. The two latter concealed their features by drawing a large black capoch, or hood, attached to their gowns, over them, and this disguise added materially to their lugubrious appearance. One of them then took down a broad iron hoop, opening in the centre with a hinge, and held it in readiness. Their preparations were scarcely completed, when heavy footsteps announced the approach of Fawkes and his attendants. Jasper Ipgreve ushered them into the chamber, and fastened the door behind them. All the subsequent proceedings were conducted with the utmost deliberation, and were, therefore, doubly impressive. No undue haste occurred; and the officials, who might have been mistaken for phantoms or evil spirits, spoke only in whispers. Guy Fawkes watched their movements with unaltered composure. At length Jasper Ipgreve signified to the lieutenant that all was ready.

"The opportunity you desired of having your courage put to the test is now arrived," said the latter to the prisoner.

"What am I to do?" was the reply.

"Remove your doublet, and prostrate yourself," subjoined Ipgreve.

Guy Fawkes obeyed, and, when in this posture, began audibly to recite a prayer to the Virgin.

"Be silent," cried the lieutenant, "or a gag shall be thrust into your mouth."

Kneeling upon the prisoner's shoulders, and passing the hoop under his legs, Ipgreve then succeeded, with the help of his assistants, who added their weight to his own, in fastening the hoop with an iron button. This done, they left the prisoner with his limbs and body so tightly compressed together that he was scarcely able to breathe. In this state he was allowed to remain for an hour and a half. The surgeon then found, on examination, that the blood had burst profusely from his mouth and nostrils, and in a slighter degree from the extremities of his hands and feet.

"He must be released," he observed, in an under tone, to the lieutenant. "Further continuance might be fatal."

Accordingly, the hoop was removed, and it was at this moment that the prisoner underwent the severest trial. Despite his efforts to control himself, a sharp convulsion passed across his frame, and the restoration of impeded circulation and respiration occasioned him the most acute agony.

The surgeon bathed his temples with vinegar, and his limbs being chafed by the officials, he was placed on a bench.

"My warrant directs me to begin with the 'gentler tortures,' and to proceed by degrees to extremities," observed the lieutenant, significantly. "You have now had a taste of the milder sort, and may form some conjecture what the worst are like. Do you still continue contumacious?"

"I am in the same mind as before," replied Fawkes, in a hoarse but firm voice.

"Take him to the Little Ease, and let him pass the night there," said the lieutenant. "To-morrow I will continue the investigation."

Fawkes was then led out by Ipgreve and the officials, and conveyed along a narrow passage, until arriving at a low door, in which there was an iron grating, it was opened, and disclosed a narrow cell, about four feet high, one and a few inches wide, and two deep. Into this narrow receptacle, which seemed wholly inadequate to contain a tall and strongly-built man like himself, the prisoner was with some difficulty thrust, and the door locked upon him.

In this miserable plight, with his head bent upon his breast—the cell being so contrived that its wretched inmate could neither sit, nor recline at full length within it—Guy Fawkes prayed long and fervently; and no longer troubled by the uneasy feelings which had for some time haunted him, he felt happier in his present forlorn condition than he had been when anticipating the full success of his project.

"At least," he thought, "I shall now win myself a crown of martyrdom; and whatever my present sufferings may be, they will be speedily effaced by the happiness I shall enjoy hereafter."

Overcome, at length, by weariness and exhaustion, he fell into a sort of doze—it could scarcely be called sleep—and, while in this state, fancied he was visited by Saint Winifred, who, approaching the door of the cell, touched it, and it instantly opened. She then placed her hand upon his limbs, and the pain he had hitherto felt in them subsided.

"Your troubles will soon be over," murmured the saint, "and you will be at rest. Do not hesitate to confess. Your silence will neither serve your companions nor yourself."

With these words the vision disappeared, and Guy Fawkes awoke. Whether it was the effect of imagination, or that his robust constitution had in reality shaken off the effects of the torture, it is impossible to say, but it is certain that he felt his strength restored to him, and, attributing his recovery entirely to the marvellous interposition of the saint, he addressed a prayer of gratitude to her. While thus occupied, he heard—for it was so dark he could distinguish nothing—a sweet low voice at the grating of the cell, and, imagining it was the same benign presence as before, paused and listened.

"Do you hear me?" asked the voice.

"I do," replied Fawkes. "Is it the blessed Winifred who again vouchsafes to address me?"

"Alas, no!" replied the voice; "it is one of mortal mould. I am Ruth Ipgreve, the gaoler's daughter. You may remember that I expressed some sympathy in your behalf at your landing at Traitor's Gate to-day, for which I incurred my father's displeasure. But you will be quite sure I am a friend, when I tell you I assisted Viviana Radcliffe to escape."

"Ha!" exclaimed Guy Fawkes, in a tone of great emotion.

"I was in some degree in her confidence," pursued Ruth; "and, if I am not mistaken, you are the object of her warmest regard."

The prisoner could not repress a groan.

"You are Guy Fawkes," pursued Ruth. "Nay, you need have no fear of me. I have risked my life for Viviana, and would risk it for you."

"I will disguise nothing from you," replied Fawkes. "I am he you

have named. As the husband of Viviana—for such I am—I feel the deepest gratitude to you for the service you rendered her. She bitterly reproached herself with having placed you in so much danger. How did you escape?”

“I was screened by my parents,” replied Ruth. “It was given out by them that Viviana escaped through the window of her prison, and I was thus preserved from punishment. Where is she now?”

“In safety, I trust,” replied Fawkes. “Alas! I shall never behold her again.”

“Do not despair,” returned Ruth. “I will try to effect your liberation; and though I have but slender hope of accomplishing it, still there is a chance.”

“I do not desire it,” returned Fawkes. “I am content to perish. All I lived for is at an end.”

“This shall not deter me from trying to save you,” replied Ruth; “and I still trust there is happiness in store for you with Viviana. Amid all your sufferings, rest certain there is one who will ever watch over you. I dare not remain here longer, for fear of a surprise. Farewell.”

She then departed, and it afforded Guy Fawkes some solace to ponder on the interview during the rest of the night.

On the following morning Jasper Ipgreve appeared, and placed before him a loaf of the coarsest bread, and a jug of dirty water. His scanty meal ended, he left him, but returned in two hours afterwards with a party of halberdiers, and desiring him to follow him, led the way to the torture-chamber. Sir William Waad was there when he arrived, and demanding in a stern tone whether he still continued obstinate, and receiving no answer, ordered him to be placed in the gauntlets. Upon this, he was suspended from a beam by his hands, and endured five hours of the most excruciating agony—his fingers being so crushed and lacerated that he could not move them.

He was then taken down, and still refusing to confess, was conveyed to a horrible pit, adjoining the river, called, from the loathsome animals infesting it, “the dungeon among the rats.” It was about twenty feet wide and twelve deep, and at high tide was generally more than two feet deep in water.

Into this dreadful chasm was Guy Fawkes lowered by his attendants, who, warning him of the probable fate that awaited him, left him in total darkness. At this time the pit was free from water; but he had not been there more than an hour, when a bubbling and hissing sound proclaimed that the tide was rising, while frequent splashes convinced him that the rats were at hand. Stooping down, he felt that the water was alive with them—that they were all around him—and would not, probably, delay their attack. Prepared as he was for the worst, he could not repress a shudder at the prospect of the horrible death with which he was menaced.

At this juncture, he was surprised by the appearance of a light, and perceived at the edge of the pit a female figure bearing a lantern. Not doubting it was his visitant of the former night, he called out to her, and was answered in the voice of Ruth Ipgreve.

“I dare not remain here many minutes,” she said, “because my father suspects me. But I could not let you perish thus. I will

down this lantern to you, and the light will keep away the rats. When the tide retires you can extinguish it."

So saying, she tore her kerchief into shreds, and tying the slips together, lowered the lantern to the prisoner, and without waiting to receive his thanks, hurried away.

Thus aided, Guy Fawkes defended himself as well as he could against his loathsome assailants. The light showed that the water was swarming with them—that they were creeping by hundreds up the sides of the pit, and preparing to make a general attack upon him.

At one time, Fawkes determined not to oppose them, but to let them work their will upon him; but the contact of the noxious animals made him change his resolution, and he instinctively drove them off. They were not, however, to be easily repulsed, and returned to the charge with greater fury than before. The desire of self-preservation now got the better of every other feeling, and the dread of being devoured alive giving new vigour to his crippled limbs, he rushed to the other side of the pit. His persecutors, however, followed him in myriads, springing upon him, and making their sharp teeth meet in his flesh in a thousand places.

In this way the contest continued for some time, Guy Fawkes speeding round the pit, and his assailants never for one moment relaxing in the pursuit, until he fell from exhaustion, and his lantern being extinguished, the whole host darted upon him.

Thinking all over, he could not repress a loud cry, and it was scarcely uttered when lights appeared, and several gloomy figures, bearing torches, were seen at the edge of the pit. Among these he distinguished Sir William Waad, who offered instantly to release him if he would confess.

"I will rather perish," replied Fawkes; "and I will make no further effort to defend myself. I shall soon be out of the reach of your malice."

"This must not be," observed the lieutenant to Jasper Ipgreve, who stood by. "The Earl of Salisbury will never forgive me if he perishes."

"Then not a moment must be lost, or those ravenous brutes will assuredly devour him," replied Ipgreve. "They are so fierce, that I scarcely like to venture among them."

A ladder was then let down into the pit, and the gaoler and the two officials descended. They were just in time. Fawkes had ceased to struggle, and the rats were attacking him with such fury that his words would have been speedily verified but for Ipgreve's timely interposition. On being taken out of the pit, he fainted from exhaustion and loss of blood; and when he came to himself, found he was stretched upon a couch in the torture-chamber, with the surgeon and Jasper Ipgreve in attendance. Strong broths and other restoratives were then administered; and his strength being sufficiently restored to enable him to converse, the lieutenant again visited him, and questioning him as before, received a similar answer.

In the course of that day and the next, he underwent at intervals various kinds of torture, each more excruciating than the preceding, all of which he bore with unabated fortitude. Among other applications,

the rack was employed with such rigour, that his joints started from their sockets, and his frame seemed torn asunder.

On the fourth day he was removed to another and yet gloomier chamber, devoted to the same dreadful objects as the first. It had an arched stone ceiling, and at the further extremity yawned a deep recess. Within this there was a small furnace, in which fuel was placed, ready to be kindled; and over the furnace lay a large black flag, at either end of which were stout leathern straps. After being subjected to the customary interrogations of the lieutenant, Fawkes was stripped of his attire, and bound to the flag. The fire was then lighted, and the stone gradually heated. The writhing frame of the miserable man ere long showed the extremity of his suffering; but as he did not even utter a groan, his tormentors were compelled to release him.

On this occasion there were two personages present who had never attended any previous interrogation. They were wrapped in large cloaks, and stood aloof during the proceedings. Both were treated with the most ceremonious respect by Sir William Waad, who consulted them as to the extent to which he should continue the torture. When the prisoner was taken off the heated stone, one of those persons advanced towards him, and gazed curiously at him. Fawkes, upon whose brow thick drops were standing, and who was sinking into the oblivion brought on by overwrought endurance, exclaimed, "It is the king!" and fainted.

"The traitor knew your majesty," said the lieutenant. "But you see it is in vain to attempt to extort anything from him."

"So it seems," replied James; "and I am greatly disappointed, for I was led to believe that I should hear a full confession of the conspiracy from his own lips. How say you, good master chirurgéon, will he endure further torture?"

"Not without danger of life, your majesty, unless he has some days' repose," replied the chirurgéon, "even if he can endure it then."

"It will not be necessary to apply it further," replied Salisbury. "I am now in full possession of the names of all the principal conspirators; and when the prisoner finds further concealment useless, he will change his tone. To-morrow, the commissioners appointed by your majesty for the examination of all those concerned in this dreadful project will interrogate him in the lieutenant's lodgings, and I will answer with my life that the result will be satisfactory."

"Enough," said James. "It has been a painful spectacle which we have just witnessed; and yet we would not have missed it. The wretch possesses undaunted resolution, and we can never be sufficiently grateful to the beneficent Providence that prevented him from working his ruthless purpose upon us. The day on which we were preserved from this Gunpowder Treason shall ever hereafter be kept sacred in our church, and thanks shall be returned to Heaven for our wonderful deliverance."

"Your majesty will act wisely," replied Salisbury. "The ordinance will impress the nation with a salutary horror of all Papists and traitors—for they are one and the same thing—and keep alive a proper feeling of enmity against them. Such a fearful example shall be mai

of these miscreants as shall, it is to be hoped, deter all others from following their cause. Not only shall they perish infamously, but their names shall for ever be held in execration."

"Be it so," rejoined James. "It is a good legal maxim—*Crescente malitiâ, crescere debuit et pœna.*"

Upon this he left the chamber, and, traversing a number of subterranean passages with his attendants, crossed the drawbridge near the By-ward Tower to the wharf, where his barge was waiting for him, and returned in it to Whitehall. At an early hour on the following day, the commissioners appointed to the examination of the prisoner met together in a large room on the second floor of the lieutenant's lodgings, afterwards denominated, from its use on this occasion, the Council Chamber. Affixed to the walls of this room may be seen at the present day a piece of marble sculpture, with an inscription commemorative of the event. The commissioners were nine in number, and included the Earls of Salisbury, Northampton, Nottingham, Suffolk, Worcester, Devon, Marr, and Dunbar, and Sir John Popham, lord chief justice. With these were associated Sir Edward Coke, attorney-general, and Sir William Waad.

The apartment in which the examination took place is still a spacious one, but at the period in question it was much larger and loftier. The walls were panelled with dark lustrous oak, covered in some places with tapestry, and adorned in others with paintings. Over the chimney-piece hung a portrait of the late sovereign, Elizabeth. The commissioners were grouped round a large heavily carved oak table, and, after some deliberation together, it was agreed that the prisoner should be introduced.

Sir William Waad then motioned to Topcliffe, who was in attendance with half-a-dozen halberdiers, and a few moments afterwards a panel was pushed aside, and Guy Fawkes was brought through it. He was supported by Topcliffe and Ipgreve, and it was with the greatest difficulty he could drag himself along. So severe had been the sufferings to which he had been subjected, that they had done the work of time, and placed more than twenty years on his head. His features were thin and sharp, and of a ghastly whiteness, and his eyes hollow and bloodshot. A large cloak was thrown over him, which partially concealed his shattered frame and crippled limbs; but his bent shoulders, and the difficulty with which he moved, told how much he had undergone.

On seeing the presence in which he stood, a flush for a moment rose to his pallid cheek, his eye glowed with its wonted fire, and he tried to stand erect—but his limbs refused their office—and the effort was so painful, that he fell back into the arms of his attendants. He was thus borne forward by them, and supported during his examination. The Earl of Salisbury then addressed him, and enlarging on the magnitude and horrible nature of his treason, concluded by saying that the only reparation he could offer was to disclose not only all his own criminal intentions, but the names of his associates.

"I will hide nothing concerning myself," replied Fawkes; "but I shall be for ever silent respecting others."

The earl then glanced at Sir Edward Coke, who proceeded to take own minutes of the examination.

"You have hitherto falsely represented yourself," said the earl. "What is your real name?"

"Guy Fawkes," replied the prisoner.

"And do you confess your guilt?" pursued the earl.

"I admit that it was my intention to blow up the king and the whole of the lords spiritual and temporal assembled in the parliament-house with gunpowder," replied Fawkes.

"And you placed the combustibles in the vault where they were discovered?" demanded Salisbury. The prisoner answered in the affirmative.

"You are a Papist?" continued the earl.

"I am a member of the Church of Rome," returned Fawkes.

"And you regard this monstrous design as righteous and laudable—as consistent with the religion you profess, and as likely to uphold it?" said the earl.

"I did so," replied Fawkes. "But I am now convinced that Heaven did not approve it, and I lament that it was ever undertaken."

"Still you refuse to make the only reparation in your power—you refuse to disclose your associates?" said Salisbury.

"I cannot betray them," replied Fawkes.

"Traitor! it is needless," cried the earl; "they are known to us—nay, they have betrayed themselves. They have risen in open and armed rebellion against the king; but a sufficient power has been sent against them; and if they are not ere this defeated and captured, many days will not elapse before they will be lodged in the Tower."

"If this is the case, you require no information from me," rejoined Fawkes. "But I pray you name them to me."

"I will do so," replied Salisbury; "and if I have omitted any, you can supply the deficiency. I will begin with Robert Catesby, the chief contriver of this hell-engendered plot,—I will next proceed to the superior of the Jesuits, Father Garnet,—next, to another Jesuit priest, Father Oldcorne,—next, to Sir Everard Digby,—then to Thomas Winter and Robert Winter,—then to John Wright and Christopher Wright,—then to Ambrose Rookwood, Thomas Percy, and John Grant,—and lastly, to Robert Keyes."

"Are these all?" demanded Fawkes.

"All we are acquainted with," said Salisbury.

"Then add to them the names of Francis Tresham, and of his brother-in-law, Lord Mounteagle," rejoined Fawkes. "I charge both with being privy to the plot."

"I have forgotten another name," said Salisbury, in some confusion, "that of Viviana Radcliffe, of Ordsall Hall. I have received certain information that she was wedded to you while you were resident at White Webbs, near Epping Forest, and was cognisant of the plot. If captured, she will share your fate."

Fawkes could not repress a groan. Salisbury pursued his interrogations, but it was evident, from the increasing feebleness of the prisoner, that he would sink under it if the examination was further protracted. He was therefore ordered to attach his signature to the minutes taken by Sir Edward Coke, and was placed in a chair for that purpose. A pen was then given him, but for some time his shattered fingers refus-

to grasp it. By a great effort, and with acute pain, he succeeded in tracing his Christian name thus:—

Guy —

While endeavouring to write his surname, the pen fell from his hand, and he became insensible.

CHAPTER II.—SHOWING THE TROUBLES OF VIVIANA.

ON coming to herself, Viviana inquired for Garnet; and being told that he was in his chamber alone, she repaired thither, and found him pacing to and fro in the greatest perturbation.

"If you come to me for consolation, daughter," he said, "you come to one who cannot offer it. I am completely prostrated in spirit by the disastrous issue of our enterprise; and though I tried to prepare myself for what has taken place, I now find myself utterly unable to cope with it."

"If such is your condition, father," replied Viviana, "what must be that of my husband, upon whose devoted head all the weight of this dreadful calamity now falls? You are still at liberty—still able to save yourself—still able, at least, to resist unto the death, if you are so minded. But he is a captive in the Tower, exposed to every torment that human ingenuity can invent, and with nothing but the prospect of a lingering death before his eyes. What is your condition, compared with his?"

"Happy—most happy, daughter," replied Garnet; "and I have been selfish and unreasonable. I have given way to the weakness of humanity, and I thank you from the bottom of my heart for enabling me to shake it off."

"You have indulged false hopes, father," said Viviana, "whereas I have indulged none, or rather, all has come to pass as I desired. The dreadful crime with which I feared my husband's soul would have been loaded is now uncommitted, and I have firm hope of his salvation. If I might counsel you, I would advise you to surrender yourself to justice, and by pouring out your blood on the scaffold, wash out your offence. Such will be my own course. I have been involuntarily led into connexion with this plot; and though I have ever disapproved of it, since I have not revealed it, I am as guilty as if I had been its contriver. I shall not shun my punishment. Fate has dealt hardly with me, and my path on earth has been strewn with thorns, and cast in grief and trouble; but I humbly trust that my portion hereafter will be with the blessed."

"I cannot doubt it, daughter," replied Garnet; "and though I do *not view our design in the light that you do, but regard it as justifiable, if not necessary, yet, with your feelings, I cannot sufficiently admire your conduct.* Your devotion and self-sacrifice is wholly without parallel. At the same time, I would try to dissuade you from surren-

dering yourself to our relentless enemies. Believe me, it will add the severest pang to your husband's torture to know that you are in their power. His nature is stern and unyielding, and, persuaded as he is of the justice of his cause, he will die happy in that conviction, certain that his name, though despised by our heretical persecutors, will be held in reverence by all true professors of our faith. No, daughter, fly and conceal yourself till pursuit is relinquished, and pass the rest of your life in prayer for the repose of your husband's soul."

"I will pass it in endeavouring to bring him to repentance," replied Viviana. "The sole boon I shall seek from my judges will be permission to attempt this."

"It will be refused, daughter," replied Garnet, "and you will only destroy yourself, not aid him. Rest satisfied that the Great Power who judges the hearts of men, and implants certain impulses within them, for His own wise but inscrutable purposes, well knows that Guy Fawkes, however culpable his conduct may appear in your eyes, acted according to the dictates of his conscience, and in the full confidence that the design would restore the true worship of God in this kingdom. The failure of the enterprise proves that he was mistaken—that we were all mistaken, and that Heaven was unfavourable to the means adopted; but it does not prove his insincerity."

"These arguments have no weight with me, father," replied Viviana; "I will leave nothing undone to save his soul, and whatever may be the result, I will surrender myself to justice."

"I shall not seek to move you from your purpose, daughter," replied Garnet, "and can only lament it. Before, however, you finally decide, let us pray together for directions from on high."

Thus exhorted, Viviana knelt down with the priest before a small silver image of the Virgin, which stood in a niche in the wall, and they both prayed long and earnestly. Garnet was the first to conclude his devotions; and as he gazed at the upturned countenance and streaming eyes of his companion, his heart was filled with admiration and pity.

At this juncture the door opened, and Catesby and Sir Everard Digby entered. On hearing them, Viviana immediately arose.

"The urgency of our business must plead an excuse for the interruption, if any is needed," said Catesby; "but do not retire, madam. We have no secrets from you now. Sir Everard and I have fully completed our preparations," he added, to Garnet. "Our men are all armed and mounted in the court, and are in high spirits for the enterprise. As the service, however, will be one of the greatest danger and difficulty, you had better seek a safe asylum, father, till the first decisive blow is struck."

"I would go with you, my son," rejoined Garnet, "if I did not think my presence might be an hinderance. I can only aid you with my prayers, and those can be more efficaciously uttered in some secure retreat, than during a rapid march or dangerous encounter."

"You had better retire to Coughton, with Lady Digby and Viviana," said Sir Everard. "I have provided a sufficient escort to guard you thither, and, as you are aware, there are many hiding-places in the house, where you can remain undiscovered in case of search."

"I place myself at your disposal," replied Garnet. "But Viviana is resolved to surrender herself."

"This must not be," returned Catesby. "Such an act at this juncture would be madness, and would materially injure our cause. Whatever your inclinations may prompt, you must consent to remain in safety, madam."

"I have acquiesced in your proceedings thus far," replied Viviana, "because I could not oppose them without injury to those dear to me. But I will take no further share in them. My mind is made up as to the course I shall pursue."

"Since you are bent upon your own destruction, for it is nothing less, it is the duty of your friends to save you," rejoined Catesby. "You shall not do what you propose; and when you are yourself again, and have recovered from the shock your feelings have sustained, you will thank me for my interference."

"You are right, Catesby," observed Sir Everard; "it would be worse than insanity to allow her to destroy herself thus."

"I am glad you are of this opinion," said Garnet. "I tried to reason her out of her design, but without avail."

"Catesby," cried Viviana, throwing herself at his feet, "by the love you once professed for me—by the friendship you entertained for him who unhesitatingly offered himself for you and your cause, I implore you not to oppose me now!"

"I shall best serve you, and most act in accordance with the wishes of my friend, by doing so," replied Catesby; "therefore you plead in vain."

"Alas!" cried Viviana. "My purposes are ever thwarted. You will have to answer for my life."

"I should, indeed, have it to answer for, if I permitted you to act as you desire," rejoined Catesby, "I repeat, you will thank me ere many days are passed."

"Sir Everard," exclaimed Viviana, appealing to the knight. "I entreat you to have pity upon me."

"I do sincerely sympathise with your distress," replied Digby, in a tone of the deepest commiseration; "but I am sure what Catesby advises is for the best. I could not reconcile it to my conscience to allow you to sacrifice yourself thus. Be governed by prudence."

"Oh, no—no!" cried Viviana, distractedly. "I will not be stayed. I command you not to detain me."

"Viviana," said Catesby, taking her arm, "this is no season for the display of silly weakness either on our part or yours. If you cannot control yourself, you must be controlled. Father Garnet, I entrust her to your care. Two of my troop shall attend you, together with your own servant, Nicholas Owen. You shall have stout horses, able to accomplish the journey with the greatest expedition, and I should wish you to convey her to her own mansion, Ordsall Hall, and to remain there with her till you hear tidings of us."

"It shall be as you direct, my son," said Garnet. "I am prepared to set out at once."

"That is well," replied Catesby.

"You will not do me this violence, sir," cried Viviana. "I appeal against it, to you, Sir Everard."

"I cannot help you, madam," replied the knight; "indeed I cannot."

"Then Heaven, I trust, will help me," cried Viviana, "for I am wholly abandoned of man."

"I beseech you, madam, put some constraint upon yourself," said Catesby. "If, after your arrival at Ordsall, you are still bent upon your rash and fatal design, Father Garnet shall not oppose its execution. But give yourself time for reflection."

"Since it may not be otherwise, I assent," replied Viviana. "If I must go, I will start at once."

"Wisely resolved," replied Sir Everard.

Viviana then retired, and soon afterwards appeared, equipped for her journey. The two attendants and Nicholas Owen were in the court-yard, and Catesby assisted her into the saddle.

"Do not lose sight of her," he said to Garnet, as the latter mounted.

"Rest assured I will not," replied the other.

And taking the direction of Coventry, the party rode off at a brisk pace.

Catesby then joined the other conspirators, while Sir Everard sent off Lady Digby and his household, attended by a strong escort, to Coughton. This done, the whole party repaired to the court-yard, where they called over the muster-roll of their men, to ascertain that none were missing, examined their arms and ammunition, and, finding all in order, sprang to their steeds, and putting themselves at the head of the band, rode towards Southam and Warwick.

CHAPTER III.—HUDDINGTON.

ABOUT six o'clock in the morning the conspirators reached Leamington Priors, at that time an inconsiderable village; and having ridden nearly twenty miles over heavy and miry roads—for a good deal of rain had fallen in the night—they stood in need of some refreshment. Accordingly, they entered the first farmyard they came to, and, proceeding to the cow-houses and sheepfolds, turned out the animals within them, and, fastening up their own steeds in their places, set before them whatever provender they could find. Those, and they were by far the greater number, who could not find better accommodation, fed their horses in the yard, which was strewn with trusses of hay and great heaps of corn. The whole scene formed a curious picture. Here was one party driving away the sheep and cattle, which were bleating and lowing; there, another rifling a hen-roost, and slaughtering its cackling inmates. On this hand, by the direction of Catesby, two stout horses were being harnessed with ropes to a cart, which he intended to use as a baggage-waggon; on that, Sir Everard Digby was interposing his authority to prevent the destruction of a fine porker.

Their horses fed, the next care of the conspirators was to obtain something for themselves, and ordering the master of the house, who was terrified almost out of his senses, to open his doors, they entered the dwelling, and causing a fire to be lighted in the chief room, began to boil a large kettle of broth upon it, and to cook other provisions. Finding a good store of eatables in the larder, rations were served out to the band. Two casks of strong ale were likewise broached, and their contents distributed; and a small keg of strong waters being also discovered, it was disposed of in the same way.

This, however, was the extent of the mischief done. All the conspirators, but chiefly Catesby and Sir Everard Digby, dispersed themselves amongst the band, and checked any disposition to plunder. The only articles taken away from the house were a couple of old rusty swords and a caliver. Catesby proposed to the farmer to join their expedition; but, having now regained his courage, the sturdy churl obstinately refused to stir a foot with them, and even ventured to utter a wish that the enterprise might fail.

"I am a good Protestant, and a faithful subject of King James, and will never abet Popery and treason," he said.

This bold sally would have been answered by a bullet from one of the troopers, if Catesby had not interfered.

"You shall do as you please, friend," he said, in a conciliatory tone. "We will not compel any man to act against his conscience, and we claim the same right ourselves. Will you join us, good fellows?" he added, to two farming men, who were standing near their master.

"Must I confess to a priest?" asked one of them.

"Certainly not," replied Catesby. "You shall have no constraint whatever put upon you. All I require is obedience to my commands in the field."

"Then I am with you," replied the fellow.

"Thou'rt a traitor and rebel, Sam Morrell," cried the other hind, "and wilt come to a traitor's end. I will never fight against King James. And if I must take up arms, it shall be against his enemies, and in defence of our religion. No priests—no Papistry for me."

"Well said, Hugh," cried his master. "We'll die in that cause, if need be."

Catesby turned angrily away, and giving the word to his men to prepare to set forth, in a few minutes all were in the saddle; but on inquiring for the new recruit, Sam Morrell, it was found he had disappeared. The cart was laden with arms, ammunition, and a few sacks of corn, and the line being formed, they commenced their march.

The morning was dark and misty, and all looked dull and dispiriting. The conspirators, however, were full of confidence, and their men, exhilarated and refreshed by their meal, appeared anxious for an opportunity of distinguishing themselves. Arrived within half a mile of Warwick, whence the lofty spire of the church of Saint Nicholas, the tower of Saint Mary's, and the ancient gates of this beautiful old town could just be discerned through the mist, a short consultation was held by the rebel leaders as to the expediency of attacking the castle, and carrying off the horses with which they had learnt its stables were filled.

Deciding upon making the attempt, their resolution was communicated to their followers, and received with loud acclamations. Catesby then put himself at the head of the band, and they all rode forward at a brisk pace. Crossing the bridge over the Avon, whence the castle burst upon them in all its grandeur and beauty, Catesby dashed forward to an embattled gate commanding the approach to the structure, and knocking furiously against it, a wicket was opened by an old porter, who started back on beholding the intruders. He would have closed the wicket, but Catesby was too quick for him, and, springing from his steed, dashed aside the feeble opposition of the old man, and barred the gate. Instantly mounting again, he galloped along a

broad and winding path, cut so deeply in the rock that the mighty pile they were approaching was completely hidden from view. A few seconds, however, brought them to a point from which its three towers reared themselves full before them. Another moment brought them to the edge of the moat, at this time crossed by a stone bridge, but then filled with water, and defended by a drawbridge.

As no attack like the present was apprehended, and as the owner of the castle, the celebrated Fulke Greville, afterwards Lord Brooke, to whom it had been recently granted by the reigning monarch, was then in the capital, the drawbridge was down, and though several retainers rushed forth on hearing the approach of so many horsemen, they were too late to raise it. Threatening these persons with destruction if any resistance was offered, Catesby passed through the great entrance, and rode into the court, where he drew up his band.

By this time, the whole of the inmates of the castle had collected on the ramparts, armed with calivers and partisans, and whatever weapons they could find; and though their force was utterly disproportioned to that of their opponents, they seemed disposed to give them battle. Paying no attention to them, Catesby proceeded to the stables, where he found upwards of twenty horses, which he exchanged for the worst and most jaded of his own, and was about to enter the castle in search of arms, when he was startled by hearing the alarm-bell rung. This was succeeded by the discharge of a culverin on the summit of the tower, named after the redoubted Guy, Earl of Warwick; and though the bell was instantly silenced, Rookwood, who had dislodged the party from the ramparts, brought word that the inhabitants of Warwick were assembling, that drums were beating at the gates, and that an attack might be speedily expected. Not desiring to hazard an engagement at this juncture, Catesby gave up the idea of ransacking the castle, and ordered his men to their horses.

Some delay, however, occurred before they could all be got together, and, meanwhile, the ringing of bells and other alarming sounds continued. At one time, it occurred to Catesby to attempt to maintain possession of the castle; but this design was overruled by the other conspirators, who represented to him the impracticability of the design. At length, the whole troop being assembled, they crossed the drawbridge, and speeded along the rocky path. Before the outer gate they found a large body of men, some on horseback and some on foot, drawn up. These persons, however, struck with terror at their appearance, retreated, and allowed them a free passage.

On turning to cross the bridge, they found it occupied by a strong and well-armed body of men, headed by the sheriff of Warwickshire, who showed no disposition to give way. While the rebel party were preparing to force a passage, a trumpet was sounded, and the sheriff, riding towards them, commanded them in the king's name to yield themselves prisoners.

"We do not acknowledge the supremacy of James Stuart, whom you call king," rejoined Catesby, sternly. "We fight for our liberties, and for the restoration of the holy Catholic religion, which we profess. Do not oppose us, or you will have cause to rue your temerity."

"Hear me," cried the sheriff, turning from him to his men: "promise you all a free pardon in the king's name, if you will thr

down your arms, and deliver up your leaders. But if, after this warning, you continue in open rebellion against your sovereign, you will all suffer the vilest death."

"Rejoin your men, sir," said Catesby, in a significant tone, and drawing a petronel.

"A free pardon and a hundred pounds to him who will bring me the head of Robert Catesby," said the sheriff, disregarding the menace.

"Your own is not worth half the sum," rejoined Catesby; and levelling the petronel, he shot him dead.

The sheriff's fall was the signal for a general engagement. Exasperated by the death of their leader, the royalist party assailed the rebels with the greatest fury, and as the latter were attacked at the same time in the rear, their situation began to appear perilous. But nothing could withstand the vigour and determination of Catesby. Cheering on his men, he soon cut a way across the bridge, and would have made good his retreat, if he had not perceived, to his infinite dismay, that Percy and Rookwood had been captured.

Regardless of any risk he might run, he shouted to those near to follow him, and made such a desperate charge upon the royalists, that in a few minutes he was by the side of his friends, and had liberated them. In trying, however, to follow up his advantage, he got separated from his companions, and was so hotly pressed on all sides, that his destruction seemed inevitable. His petronels had both brought down their mark; and in striking a blow against a stalwart trooper, his sword had shivered close to the handle. In this defenceless state his enemies made sure of him; but they miscalculated his resources.

He was then close to the side of the bridge, and, before his purpose could be divined, struck spurs deeply into his horse, and cleared the parapet with a single bound. A shout of astonishment and admiration arose alike from friend and foe, and there was a general rush towards the side of the bridge. The noble animal that had borne him out of danger was seen swimming towards the bank, and, though several shots were fired at him, he reached it in safety. This gallant action so raised Catesby in the estimation of his followers, that they welcomed him with the utmost enthusiasm, and rallying round him, fought with such vigour, that they drove their opponents over the bridge, and compelled them to flee towards the town.

Catesby now mustered his men, and finding his loss slighter than he expected, though several were so severely wounded that he was compelled to leave them behind, rode off at a quick pace. After proceeding for about four miles along the Stratford road, they turned off on the right into a narrow lane leading to Snitterfield, with the intention of visiting Norbrook, the family residence of John Grant. On arriving there, they put the house into a state of defence, and then assembled in the hall, while their followers recruited themselves in the court-yard.

"So far, well," observed Catesby, flinging himself into a chair; "the first battle has been won."

"True," replied Grant; "but it will not do to tarry here long. This house cannot hold out against a prolonged attack."

"We will not remain here more than a couple of hours," replied

Catesby; "but where shall we go next? I am for making some desperate attempt, which shall strike terror into our foes."

"Are we strong enough to march to the Earl of Harrington's mansion, near Coventry, and carry off the Princess Elizabeth?" asked Percy.

"She were indeed a glorious prize," replied Catesby; "but I have no doubt, on the first alarm of our rising, she has been conveyed to a place of safety. And even if she were there, we should have the whole armed force of Coventry to contend with. No—no, it will not do to attempt that."

"Nothing venture nothing have!" cried Sir Everard Digby. "We ought, in my opinion, to run any risk to secure her."

"You know me too well, Digby," rejoined Catesby, "to doubt my readiness to undertake any project, however hazardous, which would offer the remotest chance of success. But in this I see none, unless, indeed, it could be accomplished by stratagem. Let us first ascertain what support we can obtain, and then decide upon the measures to be adopted."

"I am content," returned Digby.

"Old Mr. Talbot of Grafton is a friend of yours, is he not?" continued Catesby, addressing Thomas Winter. "Can you induce him to join us?"

"I will try," replied Thomas Winter; "but I have some misgivings."

"Be not faint-hearted," rejoined Catesby. "You and Stephen Littleton shall go to him at once, and join us at your own mansion of Huddington, whither we will proceed as soon as our men are thoroughly recruited. Use every argument you can devise with Talbot—tell him that the welfare of the Catholic cause depends on our success—and that neither his years nor infirmities can excuse his absence at this juncture. If he will not, or cannot come himself, cause him to write letters to all his Catholic neighbours, urging them to join us, and bid him send all his retainers and servants to us."

"I will not neglect a single plea," replied Thomas Winter; "and I will further urge compliance by his long friendship towards myself. But, as I have just said, I despair of success."

Soon after this, he and Stephen Littleton, with two of the troopers well-mounted and well-armed, rode across the country through lanes and by-roads, with which they were well acquainted, to Grafton. At the same time, Catesby repaired to the court-yard, and assembling his men, found there were twenty-five missing. More than half of these it was known had been killed or wounded at Warwick; but the rest, it was suspected, had deserted. Whatever effect this scrutiny might secretly have upon Catesby, he maintained a cheerful and confident demeanour, and, mounting a flight of steps, harangued the band in energetic and exciting terms. Displaying a small image of the Virgin to them, he assured them they were under the special protection of Heaven, whose cause they were fighting, and concluded by reciting a prayer, in which the whole assemblage heartily joined. This done, they filled the baggage-cart with provisions and further ammunition, and forming themselves into good order, took the road to Alcester.

They had not gone far when torrents of rain fell, and the road being in a shocking condition, and ploughed up with ruts, they turn

into the fields wherever it was practicable, and continued their march very slowly, and under excessively disheartening circumstances. On arriving at the ford across the Avon, near Bishopston, they found the stream so swollen that it was impossible to get across it. Sir Everard Digby, who made the attempt, was nearly carried off by the current. They were therefore compelled to proceed to Stratford, and crossed the bridge.

"My friends," said Catesby, commanding a halt at a short distance of the town, "I know not what reception we may meet with here—probably much the same as at Warwick. But I command you not to strike a blow except in self-defence."

Those injunctions given, attended by the other conspirators, except Percy and Rookwood, who brought up the rear, he rode slowly into Stratford, and proceeding to the market-place, ordered a trumpet to be sounded. On the first appearance of the troop, most of the inhabitants fled to their houses, and fastened the doors, but some few courageous persons followed them at a wary distance. These were harangued at some length by Catesby, who called upon them to join the expedition, and held out promises, which only excited the derision of the hearers.

Indeed, the dejected looks of most of the band, and the drenched and muddy state of their apparel, made them objects of pity and contempt, rather than of serious apprehension; and nothing but their numbers prevented an attack being made upon them. Catesby's address concluded amid groans of dissatisfaction; and finding he was wasting time and injuring his own cause, he gave the word to march, and moved slowly through the main street; but not a single recruit joined him.

Another unpropitious circumstance occurred just as they were leaving Stratford. Two or three of his followers tried to slink away, when Catesby, riding after them, called to them to return; and no attention being paid to his orders, he shot the man nearest him, and compelled the others, by threats of the same punishment, to return to their ranks. This occurrence, while it occasioned much discontent and ill-will among the band, gave great uneasiness to their leaders. Catesby and Percy now brought up the rear, and kept a sharp look-out, to check any further attempt at desertion.

Digby and Winter, being well acquainted with all the Catholic gentry in the neighbourhood, they proceeded to their different residences, and were uniformly coldly received, and in some cases dismissed with reproaches and menaces. In spite of all their efforts, too, repeated desertions took place; and long before they reached Alcester their force was diminished by a dozen men. Not thinking it prudent to pass through the town, they struck into a lane on the right, and fording the Arrow near Ragley, skirted that extensive park, and crossing the hills near Weethly and Stony Moreton, arrived in about an hour and a half, in a very jaded condition, at Huddington, the seat of Robert Winter. Affairs seemed to wear so unpromising an aspect, that Catesby, on entering the house, immediately called a council of his friends, and asked them what they proposed to do.

"For my own part," he said, "I am resolved to fight it out. I will continue my march as long as I can get a man to follow me, and when they are all gone, will proceed alone. But I will never yield."

"We will all die together, if need be," said Sir Everard Digby. "Let

us rest here to-night, and in the morning proceed to Lord Windsor's mansion, Hewel Grange, which I know to be well stocked with arms, and, after carrying off all we can, we will fortify Stephen Littleton's house at Holbeach, and maintain it for a few days against our enemies."

This proposal agreed to, they repaired to the court-yard, and busied themselves in seeing the wants of their followers attended to; and such a change was effected by good fare and a few hours' repose, that the spirits of the whole party revived, and confidence was once more restored. A slight damp, however, was again thrown upon the satisfaction of the leaders by the return of Thomas Winter and Stephen Littleton from Grafton. Their mission had proved wholly unsuccessful. Mr. Talbot had not merely refused to join them, but had threatened to detain them.

"He says we deserve the worst of deaths," observed Thomas Winter, in conclusion, "and that we have irretrievably injured the Catholic cause."

"And I begin to fear he speaks the truth," rejoined Christopher Wright. "However, for us there is no retreat."

"None whatever," rejoined Catesby, in a sombre tone. "We must choose between death upon the battle-field or on the scaffold."

"The former be my fate," cried Percy.

"And mine," added Catesby.

An anxious and perturbed night was passed by the conspirators, and many a plan was proposed and abandoned. It had been arranged among them that they should each in succession make the rounds of the place, to see that the sentinels were at their posts,—strict orders having been given to the latter to fire upon whomsoever might attempt to fly,—but, as Catesby, despite his great previous fatigue, was unable to rest, he took this duty chiefly upon himself. Returning at midnight from an examination of the court-yard, he was about to enter the house, when he perceived before him a tall figure, with a cloak muffled about its face, standing in his path. It was perfectly motionless, and Catesby, who carried a lantern in his hand, threw the light upon it, but it neither moved forward, nor altered its position. Catesby would have challenged it, but an undefinable terror seized him, and his tongue clove to the roof of his mouth. An idea arose to his mind that it was the spirit of Guy Fawkes, and, by a powerful effort, he compelled himself to address it.

"Are you come to warn me?" he demanded.

The figure moved in acquiescence; and, withdrawing the cloak, revealed features of ghastly paleness, but resembling those of Fawkes.

"Have I long to live?" demanded Catesby.

The figure shook its head.

"Shall I fall to-morrow?" pursued Catesby.

The figure again made a gesture in the negative.

"The next day?"

Solemnly inclining its head, the figure once more muffled its ghastly visage in its cloak, and melted from his view. For some time Catesby remained in a state almost of stupefaction. He then summoned up all the resolution of his nature, and instead of returning to the house, continued to pace to and fro in the court, and at last walked forth into the

garden. It was profoundly dark, and he had not advanced many steps when he suddenly encountered a man. Repressing the exclamation that rose to his lips, he drew a petronel from his belt, and waited till the person addressed him.

"Is it you, Sir John Foliot?" asked a voice, which he instantly recognised as that of Topcliffe.

"Ay," replied Catesby, in a low tone.

"Did you manage to get into the house?" pursued Topcliffe.

"I did," returned Catesby; "but speak lower. There is a sentinel within a few paces of us. Come this way."

And grasping the other's arm, he drew him further down the walk.

"Do you think we may venture to surprise them?" demanded Topcliffe.

"Hum!" exclaimed Catesby, hesitating, in the hope of inducing the other to betray his design.

"Or shall we wait the arrival of Sir Richard Walsh, the sheriff of Worcestershire, and the *posse comitatús*?" pursued Topcliffe.

"How soon do you think the sheriff will arrive?" asked Catesby, scarcely able to disguise his anxiety.

"He cannot be here before daybreak—if so soon," returned Topcliffe; "and then we shall have to besiege the house; and though I have no fear of the result, yet some of the conspirators may fall in the skirmish; and my orders from the Earl of Salisbury, as I have already apprised you, are, to take them alive."

"True," replied Catesby.

"I would not for twice the reward I shall receive for the capture of the whole party that that desperate traitor, Catesby, should be slain," continued Topcliffe. "The plot was contrived by him, and the extent of its ramifications can alone be ascertained through him."

"I think I can contrive their capture," observed Catesby; "but the utmost caution must be used. I will return to the house, and find out where the chief conspirators are lodged. I will then throw open the door, and will return to this place, where you can have our men assembled. If we can seize and secure the leaders, the rest will be easy."

"You will run great risk, Sir John," said Topcliffe, with affected concern.

"Heed not that," replied Catesby. "You may expect me in a few minutes. Get together your men as noiselessly as you can."

With this, he hastily withdrew. On returning to the house he instantly roused his companions, and acquainted them with what had occurred.

"My object," he said, "is to make Topcliffe a prisoner. We may obtain much useful information from him. As to the others, if they offer resistance we will put them to death."

"What force have they?" asked Sir Everard Digby, with some uneasiness.

"It is impossible to say precisely," replied Catesby; "but not more than a handful of men, I should imagine, as they are waiting for Sir Richard Walsh."

"I know not what may be the issue of this matter," observed Robert Winter, whose looks were unusually haggard; "but I have had a range and ominous dream, which fills me with apprehension."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Catesby, upon whose mind the recollection of the apparition he had beheld rushed.

"Catesby," pursued Robert Winter, taking him aside, "if you have any sin unrepented of, I counsel you to make your peace with Heaven, for I fear you are not long for this world."

"It may be so," rejoined Catesby, firmly; "and I have many dark and damning sins upon my soul; but I will die as I have lived, firm and unshaken to the last. And now, let us prepare for our foes."

So saying, he proceeded to call up the trustiest of his men, and enjoining profound silence upon them, disposed them in various places, that they might instantly appear at his signal. After giving them other directions, he returned to the garden and coughed slightly. He was answered by a quickly approaching footstep, and a voice demanded,

"Are you there, Sir John?"

Catesby answered, in a low tone, in the affirmative.

"Come forward, then," rejoined Topcliffe.

As he spoke, there was a rush of persons towards the spot, and seizing Catesby, he cried, in a triumphant tone, while he unmasked a lantern, and threw its light full upon his face,

"You are caught in your own trap, Mr. Catesby. You are my prisoner."

"Not so, villain," cried Catesby, disengaging himself by a powerful effort.

Springing backwards, he drew his sword, and making the blade describe a circle round his body, effected his retreat in safety, though a dozen shots were fired at him. Leaping the garden wall, he was instantly surrounded by the other conspirators, and the greater part of the band, who, hearing the reports of the fire-arms, had hurried to the spot. Instantly putting himself at their head, Catesby returned to the garden; but Topcliffe and his party had taken the alarm and fled. Torches were brought, and, by Catesby's directions, a large heap of dry stubble was set on fire. But, though the flames revealed every object for a considerable distance around them, no traces of the hostile party could be discerned.

After continuing their ineffectual search for some time, the conspirators returned to the house, and, abandoning all idea of retiring to rest, kept strict watch during the remainder of the night. Little conversation took place. All were deeply depressed; and Catesby paced backwards and forwards within a passage leading from the hall to the dining-chamber. His thoughts were gloomy enough, and he retraced the whole of his wild and turbulent career, pondering upon its close, which he could not disguise from himself was at hand.

"It matters not," he mentally ejaculated; "I shall not die ignominiously, and I would rather perish in the vigour of manhood than linger out a miserable old age. I have striven hard to achieve a great enterprise, and having failed, have little else to live for. This band cannot hold together two days longer. Our men will desert us, or turn upon us to obtain the price set upon our heads. And, were they true, I have little reliance upon my companions. They have no longer the confidence that can alone insure success, and I expect each moment some one will propose a surrender. Surrender! I will never do so with life

Something must be done—something worthy of me—and then let me perish. I have ever prayed to die a soldier's death."

As he uttered these words unconsciously aloud, he became aware of the presence of Robert Winter, who stood at the end of the passage, watching him.

"Your prayer will not be granted, Catesby," said the latter. "Some dreadful doom, I fear, is reserved for you and all of us."

"What mean you?" demanded the other, uneasily.

"Listen to me," replied Robert Winter. "I told you I had a strange and appalling dream to-night, and I will now relate it. I thought I was in a boat upon the River Thames, when all at once the day, which had been bright and smiling, became dark and overcast,—not dark like the shades of night, but gloomy and ominous, as when the sun is shrouded by an eclipse. I looked around, and every object was altered. The tower of Saint Paul's stood awry, and seemed ready to topple down,—so did the spires and towers of all the surrounding fanes. The houses on London Bridge leaned frightfully over the river, and the habitations lining its banks on either side seemed shaken to their foundations. I fancied some terrible earthquake must have occurred, or that the end of the world was at hand."

"Go on," said Catesby, who had listened with profound attention to the relation.

"The stream, too, changed its colour," continued Robert Winter, "and became red as blood, and the man who rowed my boat was gone, and his place occupied by a figure masked and habited like an executioner. I commanded him to row me ashore, and in an instant the bark shot to land, and I sprang out, glad to be liberated from my mysterious conductor. My steps involuntarily led me towards the cathedral, and, on entering it, I found its pillars, shrines, monuments, and roof hung with black. The throng that ever haunt Paul's Walk had disappeared, and a few dismal figures alone traversed the aisles. On approaching them, I recognised in their swollen, deathlike, and blackened lineaments, some resemblance to you and our friends. I was about to interrogate them, when I was awakened by yourself."

"A strange dream, truly," observed Catesby, musingly, "and, coupled with what I myself have seen to-night, would seem to bode evil."

And he then proceeded to describe the supernatural appearance he had beheld to his companion.

"All is over with us," rejoined Robert Winter. "We must prepare to meet our fate."

"We must meet it like men,—like brave men, Robert," replied Catesby. "We must not disgrace ourselves and our cause."

"You are right," rejoined Robert Winter; "but these visions are more terrible than the contemplation of death itself."

"If you require further rest, take it," returned Catesby. "In an hour I shall call up our men, and march to Hewel Grange."

"I am wearied enough," replied Robert Winter, "but I dare not close my eyes again."

"Then recommend your soul to Heaven," said Catesby. "I would be alone. Melancholy thoughts press upon me, and I desire to unburden my heart to God."

Robert Winter then left him, and he withdrew into a closet, where there was an image of the Virgin, and kneeling before it, prayed long and fervently. Arising in a calmer frame of mind, he returned to the hall, and summoning his companions and followers, their horses were brought forth, and they commenced their march.

It was about four o'clock when they started, and so dark, that they had some difficulty in finding the road. They proceeded at a slow pace, and with the utmost caution; but notwithstanding this, and though the two Winters and Grant, who were well acquainted with the country, led the way, many trifling delays and disasters occurred. Their baggage-cart frequently stuck fast in the deep ruts, while the men, missing their way, got into the trenches skirting the lane, and were not unfrequently thrown from their horses. More than once, too, the alarm was given that they were pursued, and a sudden halt ordered; but these apprehensions proved groundless, and, after a most fatiguing ride, they found themselves at Stoke Prior, and within two miles of Hewel Grange.

Originally built in the early part of the reign of Henry the Eighth, and granted by that monarch to an ancestor of its present possessor, Lord Windsor, this ancient mansion was quadrangular in form, and surrounded by a broad deep fosse. Situated in the heart of an extensive park, at the foot of a gentle hill, it was now approached from the brow of the latter beautiful eminence by the rebel party. But at this season, and at this hour, both park and mansion had a forlorn look. The weather still continued foggy, with drizzling showers, and though the trees were not yet entirely stript of their foliage, their glories had altogether departed. The turf was damp and plashy, and in some places partook so much of the character of a swamp, that the horsemen were obliged to alter their course.

But all obstacles were eventually overcome, and, in ten minutes after their entrance into the park, they were within gunshot of the mansion. There were no symptoms of defence apparent, but the drawbridge being raised, it was Catesby's opinion, notwithstanding appearances, that their arrival was expected. He was further confirmed in this idea when, sounding a trumpet, and calling to the porter to let down the drawbridge, no answer was returned.

The entrance to the mansion was through a lofty and machiolated gateway, strengthened at each side by an embattled turret. Perceiving a man at one of the loopholes, Catesby discharged his petronel at him, and it was evident from the cry that followed that the person was wounded. An instant afterwards calivers were thrust through the other loopholes, and several shots fired upon the rebels, while some dozen armed men appeared upon the summit of the tower, and likewise commenced firing.

Perceiving Topcliffe among the latter, and enraged at the sight, Catesby discharged another petronel at him, but without effect. He then called to some of his men to break down the door of an adjoining barn, and to place it in the moat. The order was instantly obeyed, and the door floated in the fosse, and springing upon it, he impelled himself with a pike towards the opposite bank. Several shots were fired at him, and though more than one struck the door, he crossed the moat uninjured. So suddenly was this daring passage effected, that before any of the defenders of the mansion could prevent him, Catesby had sever

the links of the chain fastening the drawbridge, and it fell clattering down.

With a loud shout, his companions then crossed it. But they had still a difficulty to encounter. The gates, which were of great strength, and covered with plates of iron, were barred. But a ladder having been found in the barn, it was brought forward, and Catesby mounting it sword in hand, drove back all who opposed him, and got upon the wall. He was followed by Sir Everard Digby, Percy, and several others, and driving the royalists before them, they made their way down a flight of stone steps, and, proceeding to the gateway, threw it open, and admitted the others. All this was the work of a few minutes.

Committing the ransacking of the mansion to Digby and Percy, and commanding a dozen men to follow him, Catesby entered a small arched doorway, and ascended a winding stone staircase in search of Topcliffe. His progress was opposed by the soldiers; but, beating aside all opposition, he gained the roof. Topcliffe, however, was gone. Anticipating the result of the attack, he had let himself drop from the summit of the tower to the walls, and descending by the ladder, had made good his retreat. Disarming the soldiers, Catesby then descended to the court-yard, where in a short time a large store of arms, consisting of corslets, demi-lances, pikes, calivers, and two falconets, were brought forth. These, together with a cask of powder, were placed in the baggage-waggon. Meanwhile, the larder and cellar had been explored, and provisions of all kinds, together with a barrel of mead, and another of strong ale, being found, they were distributed among the men.

While this took place, Catesby searched the mansion, and partly by threats, partly by persuasion, induced about twenty persons to join them. This unlooked-for success so encouraged the conspirators, that their drooping spirits began to revive. Catesby appeared as much elated as the others, but at heart he was full of misgiving. Soon afterwards, the rebel party quitted Hewel Grange, taking with them every weapon they could find. The forced recruits were placed in the midst of the band, so that escape was impracticable.

CHAPTER IV.—HOLBEACH.

AVOIDING the high road, and traversing an unfrequented part of the country, the conspirators shaped their course towards Stourbridge. As they reached Forfield Green, they perceived a large party descending the hilly ground near Bromsgrove, and evidently in pursuit of them. An immediate halt was ordered, and, taking possession of a farmhouse, they prepared for defence.

Seeing these preparations, their pursuers, who proved to be Sir Richard Walsh, the sheriff of Worcestershire, Sir John Foliot, three gentlemen named Ketelbye, Salwaye, and Conyers, attended by a *large posse of men*, all tolerably well armed, drew up at some distance from the farm, and appeared to be consulting as to the prudence of making an attack. Topcliffe was with them; and Catesby, who *connoitred* their proceedings from a window of the dwelling, inferred

from his gestures that he was against the assault. And so it proved. The royalist party remained where they were; and as one or two of their number occasionally disappeared, Catesby judged, and correctly, that they were despatched for a reinforcement.

Not willing to wait for this, he determined to continue his march, and, accordingly, forming his men into a close line, and bringing up the rear himself, they again set forward. Sir Richard Walsh and his party followed them, and whenever they were in a difficult part of the road, harassed them with a sudden attack. In this way, several stragglers were cut off, and a few prisoners made. So exasperated did Catesby become by these annoyances, that, though desirous to push forward as fast as possible, he halted at the entrance of a common, and prepared for an engagement. But his purpose was defeated, for the royalist party took another course, nor did he see anything more of them for some time.

In about an hour the rebels arrived at the banks of the River Stour, not far from the little village of Churchill, and here, just as they were preparing to ford the stream, the sheriff and his followers again made their appearance. By this time, also, the forces of their opponents were considerably augmented, and as more than a third of their own party were engaged in crossing the stream, which was greatly swollen by the recent rains, and extremely dangerous, their position was one of no slight peril.

Nothing daunted, Catesby instantly drew up his men on the bank, and, after a short skirmish, drove away the enemy, and afterwards contrived to cross the river without much loss. He found, however, that the baggage-cart had got immersed in the stream, and it was feared that the powder would be damaged. They remained on the opposite bank for some time; but as their enemies did not attempt to follow them, they took the way to Holbeach, a large and strongly built mansion belonging, as has been already stated, to Stephen Littleton. Here they arrived without further molestation, and their first business was to put it into a complete state of defence.

After a long and anxious consultation, Sir Everard Digby quitted them, undertaking to return on the following day with succours. Stephen Littleton also disappeared on the same evening. His flight produced a strong impression on Catesby, and he besought the others not to abandon the good cause, but to stand by it, as he himself meant to do, to the last. They all earnestly assured him that they would do so, except Robert Winter, who sat apart, and took no share in their discourse.

Catesby then examined the powder that had been plunged in the water in crossing the Stour, and found it so much wetted as to be nearly useless. A sufficient stock of powder being of the utmost consequence to them, he caused all the contents of the barrel, not dissolved by the immersion, to be poured into a large platter, and proceeded to dry it before a fire which had been kindled in the hall. A bag of powder, which had likewise been slightly wetted, was also placed at what was considered a safe distance from the fire.

"Heaven grant this may prove more destructive to our enemies than the combustibles we placed in the mine beneath the parliament house!" observed Percy.

"Heaven grant so, indeed!" rejoined Catesby, with a moody smile. "They would call it retribution, were we to perish by the same means which we designed for others."

"Jest not on so serious a matter, Catesby," observed Robert Winter. "For my own part, I dread the sight of powder, and shall walk forth till you have dried this, and put it away."

"You are not going to leave us like Stephen Littleton?" rejoined Catesby, suspiciously.

"I will go with him," said Christopher Wright; "so you need be under no apprehension."

Accordingly, he quitted the hall with Robert Winter, and they proceeded to the court-yard, and were conversing together on the dismal prospects of the party, when a tremendous explosion took place. The roof of the building seemed rent in twain, and amidst a shower of tiles, plaster, bricks, and broken wood falling around, the bag of powder dropped untouched at their feet.

"Mother of Mercy!" exclaimed Christopher Wright, picking it up. "Here is a providential occurrence. Had this exploded, we must all have been destroyed."

"Let us see what has happened," cried Robert Winter.

And, followed by Christopher Wright, he rushed towards the hall, and bursting open the door, beheld Catesby enveloped in a cloud of smoke, and pressing his hand to his face, which was scorched and blackened by the explosion. Rookwood was stretched on the floor in a state of insensibility, and it at first appeared that life was extinct. Percy was extinguishing the flames, which had caught his dress, and John Grant was similarly occupied.

"Those are the very faces I beheld in my dream," cried Robert Winter, gazing at them with affright. "It was a true warning."

Rushing up to Catesby, Christopher Wright clasped him in his arms, and, extinguishing his flaming apparel, cried, "Wretch that I am! that I should live to see this day!"

"Be not alarmed!" gasped Catesby. "It is nothing—it was a mere accident."

"It is no accident, Catesby," replied Robert Winter. "Heaven is against us and our design." And he quitted the room, and left the house. Nor did he return to it.

"I will pray for forgiveness!" cried John Grant, whose vision was so much injured by the explosion that he could as yet see nothing. And dragging himself before an image of the Virgin, he prayed aloud, acknowledging that the act he had designed was so bloody that it called for the vengeance of Heaven, and expressing his sincere repentance.

"No more of this," cried Catesby, staggering up to him, and snatching the image from him. "It was a mere accident, I tell you. We are all alive, and shall yet succeed." On inquiry, Christopher Wright learnt that a blazing coal had shot out of the fire, and falling into the platter containing the powder, had occasioned the disastrous accident *above described*.

CHAPTER V.—THE CLOSE OF THE REBELLION.

UNABLE longer to endure the agony occasioned by his scorched visage, Catesby called for a bucket of water, and plunged his head into it. Somewhat relieved by the immersion, he turned to inquire after his fellow-sufferers. Rookwood having been carried into the open air, had by this time regained his consciousness; Percy was shockingly injured, his hair and eyebrows burnt, his skin blackened and swollen with unseemly blisters, and the sight of one eye entirely destroyed; while John Grant, though a degree less hurt than his companions, presented a grim and ghastly appearance. In fact, the four sufferers looked as if they had just escaped from some unearthly place of torment, and were doomed henceforth to bear the brand of Divine wrath on their countenances. Seeing the effect produced on the others, Catesby rallied all his force, and treating the accident as a matter of no moment, and which ought not to disturb the equanimity of brave men, called for wine, and quaffed a full goblet. Injured as he was, and smarting with pain, Percy followed his example; but both John Grant and Rookwood refused the cup.

"Hark'e, gentlemen," cried Catesby, fiercely, "you may drink or not, as you see fit. But I will not have you assume a deportment calculated to depress our followers. Stephen Littleton and Robert Winter have basely deserted us. If you have any intention of following them, go at once. We are better without you than with you."

"I have no thought of deserting you, Catesby," rejoined Rookwood, mournfully; "and when the time arrives for action you will find I shall not be idle. But I am now assured that we have sold ourselves to perdition."

"Pshaw!" cried Catesby, with a laugh, that communicated an almost fiendish expression to his grim features; "because a little powder has accidentally exploded and blackened our faces, are we to see in the occurrence the retributive justice of Heaven? Are we to be cast down by such a trifle? Be a man, and rouse yourself. Recollect that the eyes of all England are upon us; and if we must fall, let us perish in a manner that becomes us. No real mischief has been done. My hand is as able to wield a blade, and my sight to direct a shot, as heretofore. If Heaven had meant to destroy us, the bag of powder which has been taken up in the yard, and which was sufficient not only to annihilate us, but to lay this house in ruins, would have been suffered to explode."

"Would it *had* exploded!" exclaimed John Wright. "All would then have been over."

"Are you, too, fainthearted, John?" cried Catesby. "Well, well, leave me, one and all of you. I will fight it out alone."

"You wrong me by the suspicion, Catesby," returned John Wright. "I am as true to the cause as yourself. But I perceive that our last hour is at hand, and I would it were past."

"The indulgence of such a wish at such a moment is a weakness," rejoined Catesby. "*I care not when death comes, provided it comes gloriously; and such should be your feeling. On the manner in which we meet our fate will depend the effect which our insurrection wi*

produce throughout the country. We must set a brave example to our brethren. Heaven be praised, we shall not perish on the scaffold!"

"Be not too sure of that," said Grant, gloomily. "It may yet be our fate."

"It shall never be mine," cried Catesby.

"Nor mine," added Percy. "I am so far from regarding the recent disaster as a punishment, though I am the severest sufferer by it, that I think we ought to return thanks to Heaven for our preservation."

"In whatever light the accident is viewed," observed John Wright, "we cannot too soon address ourselves to Heaven. We know not how long it may be in our power to do so."

"Again desponding," cried Catesby. "But no matter. You will recover your spirits anon."

John Wright shook his head, and Catesby, pulling his hat over his brows to hide his features, walked forth into the court-yard. He found, as he expected, that general consternation prevailed amongst the band. The men were gathered together in little knots, and, though they became silent as he approached, he perceived they were discussing the necessity of a surrender. Nothing daunted by these unfavourable appearances, Catesby harangued them in such bold terms that he soon inspired them with some of his own confidence, and completely resteadied their wavering feelings.

Elated with his success, he caused a cup of strong ale to be given to each man, and proposed, as a pledge, the restoration of the Romish Church. He then returned to the house; and summoning the other conspirators to attend him in a chamber on the ground-floor, they all prayed long and fervently, and concluded by administering the sacrament to each other. It was now thought necessary to have the damage done by the explosion repaired, and a few hours were employed in the operation. Evening was fast approaching, and Catesby, who was anxiously expecting the return of Sir Everard Digby, stationed himself on the turreted walls of the mansion to look out for him. But he came not; and, fearing some mischance must have befallen him, Catesby descended. Desirous of concealing his misgivings from his companions, he put on a cheerful manner as he joined them.

"I am surprised ere this that we have not been attacked," remarked Percy. "Our enemies may be waiting for the darkness, to take us by surprise. But they will be disappointed."

"I can only account for the delay by supposing they have encountered Sir Everard Digby, and the force he is bringing to us," remarked Christopher Wright.

"It may be so," returned Catesby; "and if so, we shall soon learn the result."

In spite of all Catesby's efforts, he failed to engage his companions in conversation, and feeling it would best suit his present frame of mind, and contribute most to their safety, to keep in constant motion, he proceeded to the court-yard, saw that all the defences were secure, that the drawbridge was raised, the sentinels at their posts, and everything prepared for the anticipated attack. Every half hour he thus made his rounds, and when towards midnight he was going forth, Percy said to him,

"Do you not mean to take any rest, Catesby?"

"Not till I am in my grave," was the moody reply.

Catesby's untiring energy was in fact a marvel to all his followers. His iron frame seemed wholly unsusceptible of fatigue; and even when he returned to the house, he continued to pace to and fro in the passage in preference to lying down.

"Rest tranquilly," he said to Christopher Wright, who offered to take his place. "I will rouse you on the slightest approach of danger."

But though he preserved this stoical exterior, Catesby's breast was torn by the keenest pangs. He could not hide from himself, that to serve his own ambitious purposes he had involved many loyal and worthy (till he had deluded them) persons in a treasonable project, which must now terminate in their destruction; and their blood, he feared, would rest upon his head. But what weighed heaviest of all upon his soul was the probable fate of Viviana.

"If I were assured she would escape," he thought, "I should care little for all the rest, even for Fawkes. They say it is never too late to repent. But my repentance shall lie between my Maker and myself. Man shall never know it."

The night was dark, and the gloom was rendered more profound by a dense fog. Fearing an attack might now be attempted, Catesby renewed his vigilance. Marching round the edge of the moat, he listened to every sound that might betray the approach of a foe. For some time, nothing occurred to excite his suspicions, until about an hour after midnight, as he was standing at the back of the house, he fancied he detected a stealthy tread on the other side of the fosse, and soon became convinced that a party of men were there. Determined to ascertain their movements before giving the alarm, he held his breath, and drawing a petronel, remained perfectly motionless. Presently, though he could discern no object, he distinctly heard a plank pushed across the moat, and could distinguish in the whispered accents of one of the party the voice of Topcliffe. A thrill of savage joy agitated his bosom, and he internally congratulated himself that revenge was in his power.

A footstep, though so noiseless as to be inaudible to any ear less acute than his own, was now heard crossing the plank, and feeling certain it was Topcliffe, Catesby allowed him to land, and then suddenly advancing, kicked the plank, on which were two other persons, into the water, and unmasking a dark lantern, threw its light upon the face of a man near him, who proved, as he suspected, to be Topcliffe.

Aware of the advantage of making a prisoner of importance, Catesby controlled the impulse that prompted him to sacrifice Topcliffe to his vengeance, and firing his petronel in the air as a signal, he drew his sword, and sprang upon him. Topcliffe attempted to defend himself, but he was no match for the skill and impetuosity of Catesby, and was instantly overpowered and thrown to the ground. By this time, Percy and several of the band had come up, and delivering Topcliffe to the charge of two of the stoutest of them, Catesby turned his attention to the other assailants. One of them got across the moat; but the other, encumbered by his arms, was floundering about, when Catesby pointing a petronel at his head, *he was fain to surrender, and was dragged out.*

A volley of musketry was now fired by the rebels in the supposed direction of their opponents, but it could not be ascertained what execu

tion was done. After waiting for some time, in expectation of a further attack, Catesby placed a guard upon the spot, and proceeded to examine Topcliffe. He had been thrown into a cellar beneath the kitchen, and the two men were on guard over him. He refused to answer any of Catesby's questions, though enforced by threats of instant death. On searching him, some letters were found upon him, and, thrusting them into his doublet, Catesby left him, with the strictest injunctions to the men as to his safe custody.

He then proceeded to examine the other captive, and found him somewhat more tractable. This man informed him that Topcliffe had intended to steal into the house with the design of capturing the conspirators, or, failing in that, of setting fire to the premises. He also ascertained that Topcliffe's force consisted only of a dozen men, so that no further attack need be apprehended. Notwithstanding this information, Catesby determined to be on the safe side, and, doubling the sentinels, he stationed one of the conspirators, all of whom had sprung to arms at his signal, at each of the exposed points. He then withdrew to the mansion, and examined Topcliffe's papers. The first despatch he opened was from the Earl of Salisbury, bearing date about the early part of Fawkes's confinement in the Tower, in which the earl expressed his determination of wringing a full confession from the prisoner. A bitter smile curled Catesby's lip as he read this, but his brow darkened as he proceeded, and found that a magnificent reward was offered for his own arrest.

"I must have Catesby captured," ran the missive,—“so see you spare no pains to take him. I would rather all escape than he did. His confession is of the last importance in the matter, and I rely upon your bringing him to me alive.”

"I will at least baulk him of that satisfaction," muttered Catesby. "But what is this of Viviana?" Reading further, he found that the earl had issued the same orders respecting Viviana, and that she would be rigorously dealt with if captured.

"Alas!" groaned Catesby, "I hope she will escape these inhuman butchers."

The next despatch he opened was from Tresham, and with a savage satisfaction he found that the traitor was apprehensive of double-dealing on the part of Salisbury and Mounteagle. He stated that he had been put under arrest, and was detained a prisoner in his own house; and, fearing he should be sent to the Tower, besought Topcliffe to use his influence with the Earl of Salisbury not to deal unfairly with him.

"He is rightly served!" cried Catesby, with a bitter smile. "Heaven grant they may deal with him as he dealt with us!"

The consideration of these letters furnished Catesby with food for much bitter reflection. Pacing the room to and fro with uncertain footsteps, he remained more than an hour by himself, and at last, yielding to the promptings of vengeance, repaired to the cellar in which he had placed Topcliffe, with the intention of putting him to death. What was his rage and mortification to find both the guard and the prisoner gone! A door was open, and it was evident that the fugitives had stolen to the moat, and swimming noiselessly across in the darkness, had securely effected their retreat.

Fearful of exciting the alarm of his followers, Catesby controlled his

indignation, and said nothing of the escape of the prisoner to any but his confederates, who entirely approved of the policy of silence. They continued on the alert during the remainder of the night, and no one thought of seeking repose till it was fully light, and all danger of a surprise at an end. Day dawned late and dismally. The fog that had hung round the mansion changed just before daybreak into drizzling rain, and this increased ere long to heavy and drenching showers. Everything looked gloomy and depressing, and the conspirators were so disheartened, that they avoided each other's regards.

Catesby mounted the walls of the mansion to reconnoitre. The prospect was forlorn and melancholy to the last degree. The neighbouring woods were obscured by mist; the court-yard and garden flooded with rain; and the waters of the moat spotted by the heavy shower. Not an object was in view except a hind driving cattle to a neighbouring farm. Catesby shouted to him, and the fellow, with evident reluctance approaching the brink of the moat, was asked whether he had seen any troops in the neighbourhood. The man answered in the negative, but said he had heard that an engagement had taken place in the night, about five miles from thence, near Hales Owen, between Sir Everard Digby and Sir Richard Walsh, and that Sir Everard's party had been utterly routed, and himself taken prisoner.

This intelligence was a severe blow to Catesby, as it destroyed the last faint hope he had clung to. For some time he continued wrapt in thought, and then descended to the lower part of the house. A large fire had been kept up during the night in the hall, and the greater part of the band were now gathered round it, drying their wet clothes, and conversing together. A plentiful breakfast had been served out to them, so that they were in tolerably good spirits, and many of them talked loudly of the feats they meant to perform in case of an attack.

Catesby heard these boasts, but they fell upon an idle ear. He felt that all was over; that his last chance was gone; and that the struggle could not be much longer protracted. Entering the inner room, he sat down at table with his companions, but he ate nothing, and continued silent and abstracted.

"It is now my turn to reproach you," observed Grant. "You look deeply depressed."

"Sir Everard Digby is a prisoner," replied Catesby, sternly. "His capture grieves me sorely. He should have died with us."

All echoed the wish. Catesby arose and closed the door.

"The attack will not be many hours delayed," he said; "and unless there should be some miraculous interposition in our behalf, it must end in our defeat. Do not let us survive it," he continued, earnestly. "Let us swear to stand by each other as long as we can, and to die together."

"Agreed!" cried the others.

"And now," continued Catesby, "I must compel myself to take some nourishment, for I have much to do."

Having swallowed a few mouthfuls of bread, and drained a goblet of wine, he again visited every part of the habitation, examined the arms of the men, encouraged them by his looks and words, and became satisfied, unless some unlooked-for circumstance occurred to damp their ardour, they would offer a determined and vigorous resistance.

"If I could only come off victorious in this last conflict, I should die content," thought Catesby. "And I do not despair of it."

The rain continued till eleven o'clock, when it ceased, and the mist that had attended it partially cleared off. About noon, Catesby, who was on the look-out from the walls of the mansion, descried a large troop of horsemen issuing from the wood. He immediately gave the alarm. The bell was rung, and all sprang to arms. By this time, the troop had advanced within a hundred yards of the house, and Catesby, who had rushed into the court-yard, mounted a turret near the gate to watch their movements, and issue his commands. The royalists were headed by Sir Richard Walsh, who was attended on the right by Sir John Foliot, and on the left by Topcliffe. Immediately behind them were Ketelbye, Salway, Conyers, and others who had accompanied the *posse comitatús* the day before. A trumpet was then sounded, and a proclamation made in a loud voice by a trooper, commanding the rebels in the king's name to surrender, and to deliver up their leaders. The man had scarcely concluded his speech when he was for ever silenced by a shot from Catesby.

A loud and vindictive shout was raised by the royalists, and the assault instantly commenced. Sir Richard Walsh directed the attack against the point opposite the drawbridge, while Sir John Foliot, Topcliffe, and the others dispersed themselves, and completely surrounded the mansion. Several planks were thrust across the moat, and in spite of the efforts of the rebels many of the assailants effected a passage. Catesby drove back the party under Sir Richard Walsh, and with his own hand hewed asunder their plank. In doing this he so much exposed himself, that, but for the injunctions of the sheriff, who commanded his followers not to fire upon him, he must have been slain.

The other rebel leaders displayed equal courage, and equal indifference to danger, and though, as has just been stated, a considerable number of the royalists had got across the moat, and entered the garden, they had obtained no material advantage. Sir John Foliot and Topcliffe commanded this party, and encouraged them to press on. But such a continued and well-directed firing was kept up upon them from the walls and windows of the mansion, that they soon began to show symptoms of wavering.

At this juncture, and while Topcliffe was trying to keep his men together, a concealed door in the wall was opened, and Catesby issued from it at the head of a dozen men. He instantly attacked Topcliffe and his band, put several to the sword, and drove those who resisted into the moat. Foliot and Topcliffe with difficulty escaped across the plank, which was seized and pulled over to his own side by Catesby. But the hope which this success inspired was instantly crushed. Loud shouts were raised from the opposite wing of the mansion, and Catesby, to his great dismay, perceived, from the volumes of smoke ascending from it, that it was on fire. Uttering an exclamation of rage and despair, he commanded those with him not to quit their present position, and set off in the direction of the fire.

He found that an outbuilding had been set in flames by a lighted brand thrown across the moat by a trooper. The author of the action was named John Streete, and was afterwards rendered notorious by *another feat to be presently related*. Efforts were made to extinguish the conflagration, but such was the confusion prevailing, that it was *found wholly impossible to do so*, and it was feared that the destruction of the whole mansion would ensue.

Disaster after disaster followed. Another party had crossed the moat, and burst into the court-yard. In the desperate conflict that ensued, Rookwood was shot through the arm, and severely wounded by a pike, and was borne into the house by one of his followers, whom he entreated to kill him outright; but his request was refused.

Meantime, the drawbridge was lowered, and with loud and exulting shouts the great body of the royalists crossed it. Catesby now perceived that the day was irretrievably lost. Calling to Christopher Wright, who was standing near him, to follow him, and rushing towards the court-yard, he reached it just as the royalists gained an entrance.

In numbers both parties were pretty well matched, but the rebels were now thoroughly disheartened, and seeing how matters must end, many of them threw down their arms, and begged for mercy. A destructive fire, however, was still kept up on the royalists by a few of the rebels stationed on the walls of the mansion, under the command of John Wright. Putting himself at the head of a few faithful followers, Catesby fought with all the fury of despair. Christopher Wright was shot by his side. Grant instantly sprang forward, but was cut down by a trooper. Catesby was too busily occupied to attend to the fate of his companions, but seeing Thomas Winter near him, called to him to come on.

"I can fight no longer," said Thomas Winter. "My right arm is disabled by a bolt from a cross-bow."

"Then die," cried Catesby.

"He *shall* die—on the scaffold," rejoined Topcliffe, who had heard the exclamation. And rushing up to Thomas Winter, he seized him, and conveyed him to the rear of his party.

Catesby continued to fight with such determined bravery, that Sir Richard Walsh, seeing it would be in vain to take him alive, withdrew his restrictions from his men, and ordered them to slay him. By this time most of the rebels had thrown down their arms. Those on the walls had been dislodged, and John Wright, refusing to yield, was slaughtered. Catesby, however, having been joined by Percy and half-a-dozen men, made a last desperate charge upon his opponents. In doing this, his sword shivered, and he would have fallen back, but found himself surrounded. Percy was close behind him, and keeping together, they fought back to back. Even in this disabled state, they made a long and desperate resistance.

"Remember your oath, Percy," cried Catesby. "You have sworn not to be taken to the scaffold."

"Fear nothing," replied Percy. "I will never quit this spot alive."

The words were scarcely out of his mouth when he fell to the ground mortally wounded, and the same shot that had pierced his breast had likewise stricken Catesby. It was fired by the trooper John Streete, who has just been mentioned. Collecting all his force, Catesby struck a few terrible blows at his opponents, and, dashing through them, made for the house. Just as he reached the door, which was standing open, his strength failed, and he fell to the ground. In this condition, he dragged himself into the vestibule, where there was a large wooden statue of the Virgin, and, clasping his arms around it, pressed his lips to the feet of the image. He was followed by Streete, with his drawn sword in one hand and a petronel in the other, prepared to finish his work. But, ere he could reach him, Catesby had expired.

"So," exclaimed Topcliffe, who came up the next moment with Sir Richard Walsh, "we have been robbed of our prey. The Earl of Salisbury will never forgive me for this disappointment."

"I am glad I have done it, though," observed Streete. "To kill two such traitors with one shot is something to talk of."

"You will be well rewarded for it, no doubt," remarked Topcliffe, sarcastically.

"I care not whether I am or not," rejoined Streete. "I have done my duty; and besides, I have avenged my comrade, Richard Trueman, who was shot by this traitor when he read the proclamation."

"I will take care that your brave action is duly represented to his majesty," observed Sir Richard Walsh.

And he failed not to keep his promise. Streete received a pension of two shillings a day for the rest of his life—no inconsiderable sum in those days. The conflict was now at an end, for though some few of the more desperate of the rebels continued to struggle after their leaders had fallen, they were soon disarmed. Sir Richard Walsh and Topcliffe went in search of the other conspirators, and finding Rookwood and Grant, who though severely wounded were not dead, lying in the hall, immediately secured them. Rookwood on their approach made an effort to plunge his dagger into his breast, but his hand was stayed by Sir Richard Walsh.

"We shall not go away quite empty-handed," cried Topcliffe. "But these are sorry substitutes for Catesby."

"Has Catesby escaped?" demanded Grant, faintly.

"Ay, to the other world," replied Topcliffe.

"He has kept his word," groaned Grant.

"He may have escaped some part of his punishment," said Topcliffe, bitterly; "but the worst remains. His quarters will be exposed on every gate in London, and his head on the bridge. As to you, traitors, you know your doom."

"And are prepared for it," rejoined Grant.

A guard being left over the prisoners, Sir Richard Walsh and Topcliffe then went to see that the other captives were properly secured. Some few having made their escape into the adjoining fields, they were pursued and recaptured. The whole of the prisoners were then conveyed to Stourbridge, where they were lodged in the gaol, after which Sir Richard Walsh despatched a messenger to the Earl of Salisbury and the lords of the council, acquainting them with what he had done.

CHAPTER VI.—HAGLEY.

ROBERT WINTER, it may be remembered, immediately after the explosion, quitted Holbeach, and did not return to it. He proceeded to the neighbouring thicket, and while wandering about in a state bordering on distraction encountered Stephen Littleton, who had likewise deserted his companions on the same day. Acquainting him with the disastrous occurrence that had taken place, and stating his impression that both God and man were against them, and that it would be vain as well as impious to struggle longer, he proposed to him to surrender. But Stephen Littleton so strongly combated this opinion, that he at last consented to make an effort to escape. This, however, was no easy matter, nor could they devise a plan that ap-

peared feasible. Both were well provided with money; but under present circumstances it would be of little use to them. A large price being set on their heads, and the whole country alarmed, they scarcely knew where to seek shelter. After a long debate they quitted the covert, and keeping clear of all habitations, took the direction of Stourbridge.

On approaching the Stour, at a point opposite Churchill, where they knew the river was fordable, they perceived Sir Richard Walsh's force approaching, and threw themselves into a ditch to avoid observation. It was quite dark when they again ventured forth, and at the peril of their lives they forded the Stour, which was swollen more than it had been in the morning by the long-continued rain. Their design was to proceed to Hagley, the residence of Stephen Littleton's sister, Mrs. Littleton, and to claim her protection. This magnificent mansion lay about two miles on the other side of the river, in the heart of an extensive park, but they were obliged to take a circuitous route of nearly double the distance to reach it, and when at length they arrived there, and were about to steal into the court-yard, they found it occupied by a portion of Sir Richard Walsh's troop.

Overcome by anxiety and fatigue, and scarcely knowing whither to proceed, they recrossed the park, and sought out the cottage of a poor woman, whose two sons had joined their ill-fated expedition, and were at that moment under arms at Holbeach. She was a good Catholic, and they thought they might confide in her. Arriving at her cottage, they glanced in at the window, and perceiving her, as they concluded, alone, and cooking a small piece of meat at the fire, they raised the latch, and entered the house. The woman turned at their approach, and, uttering a cry of surprise and alarm, pointed towards a back room. They then saw that they had betrayed themselves; but the caution came too late, and a stalwart trooper, alarmed by the cry, issued from the back room. From the wretched appearance of the new comers, he at once guessed that they were rebels, and felt satisfied, from the richness of their apparel, dirtied and stained as it was, that they were persons of consequence. Accordingly, he drew a brace of petronels, and holding them at their heads, commanded them to surrender.

They were too much taken by surprise, and too enfeebled to offer resistance, and the trooper calling to the old woman to bring a cord to bind them, at the same time unloosed his own girdle, with which he fastened Robert Winter's arms behind his back. In doing this, he was compelled to lay down his petronels, and he had scarcely done so, when the woman snatched them up, and gave them to Stephen Littleton, who presented them at his head.

It was now the turn of the conspirators to triumph. In another instant, Robert Winter was released by the old woman, and the pair throwing themselves upon the trooper, forced him to the ground. They then dragged him to the back room, and stripped him of his habiliments, which Stephen Littleton put on instead of his own attire, and binding him hand and foot, returned to the old woman. At the request of Robert Winter, she furnished him with a suit of clothes belonging to one of her sons, and then set before them the best eatables she possessed. They were ravenously hungry, and soon disposed of the viands. *Meanwhile, their hostess told them that the whole country was in arms against them; that Mrs. Littleton being suspected though she had always been adverse to the design, her house*

undergone a rigorous search; but that Mr. Humphrey Littleton, not having taken any part in the insurrection, had not as yet been arrested, though it was feared he would be proved to be connected with the plot. She concluded by strongly counselling them to use the utmost caution, and to expose themselves as little as possible. They assured her she need have no apprehension on that score, and expressed great anxiety as to what would befall her when they were gone.

"I do not desire to shed blood, if it can be helped," said Stephen Littleton; "but in a case of necessity, like the present, where life must be weighed against life, I hold it lawful to shed it. Shall we put the trooper to death?"

"Not unless your own safety requires it, good sirs," she said. "I shall quit this cottage soon after you have left it, and obtain a safe asylum with one of my neighbours. It matters not what becomes of me. Having lost my two sons—for I consider them as already dead—I have nothing left to bind me to life."

Unable to make any reply, the conspirators remained for some time silent, when, by the poor woman's advice, they withdrew to an upper chamber, and stretching themselves on a bed, sought a few hours' repose. The old woman kept watch below, and they gave her one of the petronels, with strict injunctions to blow out the trooper's brains if he attempted to move. Nothing, however, occurred to alarm her, and at three o'clock she awakened them.

Offering the woman a handsome reward, which, however, she declined, they then set out; and shortly afterwards their hostess quitted her habitation, and withdrew to the cottage of a neighbour, where she remained concealed for some weeks, and then died of grief on learning that her sons had been slain during the assault of Holbeach by the royalists. Recruited by the rest they had enjoyed, the conspirators pursued their course over the fields. The weather was the same as that which disheartened their confederates at Holbeach, and the rain fell so heavily that they had soon not a dry thread upon them. But being now disguised, they were not under so much apprehension of detection. Shaping their course towards Rowley Regis, in Staffordshire, which lay about five miles from Hagley, where a farmer named Pelborrow, a tenant of Humphrey Littleton, resided, and whom they thought would befriend them, they proceeded swiftly on their way; but, though well acquainted with the country, they were so bewildered and deceived by the fog, that they strayed materially out of their course, and when it grew light, found themselves near Weoley Castle, and about four miles from Birmingham.

Confiding in their disguises, and in their power of sustaining the characters they assumed, they got into the high road, and approaching a farmhouse, Stephen Littleton, who had tied his companion's arms behind him with his belt, represented himself as a trooper conveying a prisoner from Stourbridge to Birmingham, and in consequence of this obtained a breakfast from the farmer. After their meal was over, the host, who had eyed them suspiciously, observed to the supposed trooper,

"You will overtake some of your comrades before you reach Eggbaston, and had better lose no time in joining them. You are known to me, my masters," he added, in a tone that could not be heard by the household; "but I will not betray you. Get you gone."

The conspirators did not fail to act upon the suggestion, and as soon

as they got out of sight, struck across the country in the direction of Rowley Regis, and arrived at the farmhouse, which was their destination, in about an hour. Pelborrow chanced to be in a barn adjoining his house, and alone, and on seeing them readily offered to hide them. No one had noticed their approach, and carefully concealing them amid the hay in the loft, he proceeded about his business as if nothing had happened. He could not just then procure them provisions without exciting suspicion, but when night arrived, brought them a sufficient supply for the next day.

In this way they passed nearly a week, never venturing to stir forth, for they had been traced to the neighbourhood, and constant search was going on after them. Pelborrow had great difficulty in keeping his men out of the barn, and the disappearance of the provisions excited the suspicions of his female domestics, who began to think all was not right. He therefore intimated to the conspirators that they must change their quarters, and in the dead of the night they removed to the house of another farmer named Perkes, residing on the borders of Hagley Park, to whom Pelborrow had confided the secret of their being in the neighbourhood, and who, on promise of a large reward, readily undertook to secrete them.

Perkes met them at a little distance from his house, and conducted them to a barley-mow, where he had contrived a hiding-place amid the straw for them. A woman servant and a man were both let into the secret by Perkes, and a sum of money, given him for that purpose by the conspirators, bribed them to silence. Here they remained close prisoners, unable to stir forth, or even to change their habiliments, for nearly six weeks, during which time they received constant intelligence from their protector of what was going forward, and learnt that the search for them had not relaxed. They were not without hope, however, that the worst was over, when an incident occurred that gave them serious uneasiness.

One night, Perkes, who was a stout, hale yeoman, and had formerly been warrener to Mrs. Littleton, went to catch conies, with a companion named Poynter, and returned laden with spoil. After drinking a cup or two of ale together, the pair separated, and Poynter feeling fatigued with his exertions, as well as drowsy with the liquor he had swallowed, determined to pass the night in his friend's barn, and entering it, clambered up to the loft, and laid himself in the straw. In doing this, he slipped into the hole made for the conspirators, who, aroused by his fall, instantly seized him. Terrified to death, and fancying he had fallen into the hands of gipsies or other plunderers, Poynter roared for mercy, which they were not at first disposed to show him; but the poor wretch, finding into whose hands he had fallen, besought them in such piteous terms to spare his life, affirming with the strongest oaths that he would never betray them, that they consented to spare him, on condition of his remaining with them as long as they should occupy their place of concealment.

When Perkes appeared in the morning, he was not a little surprised at finding his comrade caught in such a trap, but entirely approved of the course taken by the conspirators. Poynter, as may be supposed, was no willing captive; and being constantly pondering on the means of escape, and of obtaining the reward for the apprehension of the conspirators, at last hit upon the following expedient. While engaged

the poaching expedition with Perkes he had received a slight wound in the leg, and the close confinement to which he was now subjected inflamed it to such a degree as to render it highly dangerous. This he represented to the conspirators, who, however, would not suffer him to depart; but desired Perkes to bring him some ointment to dress his wound. The request was complied with, and feigning that it was necessary to approach the light to apply the salve, Poynter scrambled up the straw, apparently for that sole purpose. He did not attempt to fly for several days; but at last, when they were grown less suspicious, he slid down the other side of the loft, and made good his retreat.

The conspirators saw the error they had committed when too late. Not daring to pursue him, they remained in fearful anticipation of an arrest throughout the day. But they were not disturbed until night, when Perkes made his appearance. They told him what had happened; but he did not appear to be much alarmed.

"I do not think you need be afraid of him," he said. "Let me have some money, and I will go in quest of him at once, and bribe him to silence."

"Here are fifty marks," replied Stephen Littleton. "If that is not enough, take more."

"It will amply suffice," replied Perkes. "I will answer for his silence." This assurance greatly relieved the conspirators, and they were made completely easy by the return of Perkes in less than an hour afterwards, who told them he had seen Poynter, and had given him the money, binding him by the most solemn oaths not to betray them.

"I have still better news for you, my masters," he added. "Mrs. Littleton has set out for London to-day, and I have received orders from Mr. Humphrey Littleton to bring you to the hall at midnight."

This last intelligence completed their satisfaction, and they awaited Perkes's return with impatience. Shortly before midnight he came to summon them, and they set forth together. Perkes's house lay about a mile from the hall, and they soon entered the park. The night was clear and frosty,—it was now the middle of December,—and as the conspirators trod the crisp sod, and gazed at the noble but leafless trees around them, they silently returned thanks to Heaven for their restoration to freedom. Humphrey Littleton was waiting for them at the end of an avenue near the mansion, and tenderly embraced them.

Tears of joy were shed on both sides, and it seemed to Humphrey Littleton as if his brother had been restored from the grave. Dismissing Perkes with warm thanks, and promises of a further recompense, they then entered the house by a window, which had been left purposely open. Humphrey Littleton conducted them to his own chamber, where fresh apparel was provided for them; and to poor wretches who had not been able to put off their attire for so long a period, the luxury of the change was indescribably great.

The arrival of the fugitives was kept secret from all the household except the man-cook, John Ocklie, upon whose fidelity Humphrey Littleton thought he could rely. A good supper was prepared by this man, and brought up into his master's chamber, where the conspirators *were now seated before a hearth heaped with blazing logs. The conspirators needed no solicitation to fall to, and they did ample justice the good things before them.* His spirits being raised by the good *er, Robert Winter observed to the cook, who was in attendance*

upon them, "Ah! Jack, thy mistress little thinks what guests are now in her house, who have neither seen fire nor tasted a hot morsel for well-nigh two months."

"Ay, it is a sad matter," returned the cook, shaking his head; "and I wish I could offer your worships a flask of wine, or a cup of stout ale at the least. But the butler is in bed, and if I were to rouse him at this hour it might excite his suspicion. If you are willing, sir," he added, to Humphrey Littleton, "I will hie to my mother's cottage in the park, and bring a jug of ale from her."

This was agreed to, and the cook left the house. His sole object, however, was to instruct his mother to give the alarm, so that the conspirators might be arrested before morning.

On reaching her cottage, he was surprised to see a light within it, and two men there, one of whom was Poynter, and the other Mrs. Littleton's steward, Robert Hazlewood. Poynter had acquainted Hazlewood with all he knew respecting the conspirators, supposing them still in the barley-mow, and they were discussing the best means of arresting them when the cook entered the house.

"The birds are flown," he said, "as you will find, if you search the nest. But come to the hall with a sufficient force betimes to-morrow morning, and I will show you where to find them. I shall claim, however, my share of the reward, though I must not appear in the matter."

Having fully arranged their plan, he procured the ale from his mother, and returned to the hall. The conspirators soon disposed of the jug, threw themselves on a couch in the room, and instantly dropping asleep, enjoyed such repose as only falls to the lot of those who have similarly suffered. And it was well they did sleep soundly, for it was the last tranquil night they ever enjoyed! Humphrey Littleton, who, as has been stated, reposed implicit confidence in the cook, had committed the key of the chamber to him, strictly enjoining him to call them in the morning; and the fellow, feeling secure of his prey, retired to rest. About seven o'clock he burst suddenly into the room, and with a countenance of well-feigned alarm, which struck terror into the breasts of the conspirators, cried,

"Master Hazlewood and the officers are below, and say they must search the house. Poynter is with them."

"The villain has betrayed us!" cried Stephen Littleton. "Fools that we were to spare his life!"

"There is no use in lamenting your indiscretion now, sir," replied the cook; "leave it to me, and I will yet effect your escape."

"We place ourselves entirely in your hands," said Stephen Littleton.

"Go down stairs, sir," said the cook to Humphrey Littleton, "and hold Master Hazlewood in conversation for a few minutes, and I will engage to get the gentlemen safely out of the house."

Humphrey Littleton obeyed, and descending to the steward, told him he was willing to conduct him to every room in the house.

"I am certain they are here, and shall not quit it till I find them," rejoined Hazlewood. "Ah!" he exclaimed, as if struck by a sudden thought, "you say they are not in the house. Perhaps they are in the garden—in the summer-house? We will go and see."

So saying, he took half-a-dozen of his men with him, leaving Poynter and the rest with Humphrey Littleton, who was perplexed and alarmed at his conduct. Meanwhile, the cook led the two conspirators alo-

the gallery, and from thence down a back staircase, which brought them to a small door communicating with the garden. A few seconds were lost in opening it, and when they issued forth they encountered Haslewood and his men, who instantly arrested them. The unfortunate conspirators were conveyed under a strong guard to London, where they were committed to the Tower, to take their trial with their confederates.

CHAPTER VII.—VIVIANA'S LAST NIGHT AT ORDSALL HALL.

ON the evening of the third day after quitting Dunchurch, Viviana Radcliffe and her companions arrived at Ordsall Hall. They had encountered many dangers and difficulties on the journey, and were well-nigh overcome with fatigue and anxiety. Fearful of being detained, Garnet had avoided all the larger towns in the way, and had consequently been driven greatly out of the direct course. He had assumed the disguise which he usually wore when travelling, that of a lawyer, and as he possessed great mimetic talent, he sustained the character admirably. Viviana passed for his daughter, and his servant, Nicholas Owen, who was almost as clever an actor as his master, represented his clerk, while the two attendants performed the parts of clients. At Abbots-Bromley, where they halted for refreshment on the second day, having spent the night at a small village near Lichfield, they were detained by the landlord, who entertained some suspicions of them; but Garnet succeeded in frightening the man into allowing them to depart. They underwent another alarm of the same kind at Leek, and were for two hours locked up. But on the arrival of a magistrate, who had been sent for by the host, Garnet gave so plausible an account of himself, that the party were instantly set at liberty, and arrived without further molestation at their journey's end.

Viviana's last visit to the hall had been sad enough, but it was not so sad as the present. It was a dull November evening, and the wind moaned dismally through the trees, scattering the yellow leaves on the ground. The house looked forlorn and desolate. No smoke issued from the chimneys, nor was there any external indication that it was inhabited. The drawbridge was down, and as they passed over it, the hollow trampling of their steeds upon the planks vibrated painfully upon Viviana's heart. Before dismounting, she cast a wistful look around, and surveyed the grass-grown and neglected court, where, in years gone by, she had sported; the moat on whose brink she had lingered; and the surrounding woods, which she had never looked upon, even on a dreary day like the present, and when they were robbed in some measure of their beauty, without delight. Scanning the deserted mansion from roof to foundation, she traced all its gables, angles, windows, doors, and walls, and claimed every piece of carved work, every stone as a familiar object, and as associated with other and happier hours.

"It is but the wreck of what it was," she thought. "The spirit that animated it is fled. Grass grows in its courts—no cheerful voices echo in its chambers—no hospitality is maintained in its hall—but neglect, gloom, and despair claim it as their own. The habitation and its mistress are well matched."

Guessing from the melancholy expression of her countenance what was passing within, and thinking it advisable to turn the current of her thoughts, Garnet assisted her to alight, and committing the care of

their steeds to Owen and the others, proceeded with her to the principal entrance. Everything appeared in nearly the same state as when they had last seen it, and the only change that had taken place was for the worse. The ceilings were mapped and mildewed with damp; the once-gorgeously stained glass was shivered in the windows; the costly arras hung in tattered fragments from the walls; while the floors, which were still strewn with plaster and broken furniture, were flooded with the moisture that had found its way through the holes in the roof.

"Bear up, dear daughter," said Garnet, observing that Viviana was greatly distressed by the sight, "and let the contemplation of this scene of havoc, instead of casting you down, inspire you with just indignation against enemies from whom it is vain to expect justice or mercy. How many Catholic mansions have been thus laid waste! How many high-born and honourable men, whose sole fault was their adherence to the religion of their fathers, and their refusal to subscribe to doctrines against which their consciences revolted, have been put to death like your father; nay, have endured a worse fate, for they have languished out their lives in prison, while their families and retainers have undergone every species of outrage! How many a descendant of a proud line, distinguished for worth, for loyalty, and for devotion, has stood, as you now stand, upon his desolate hearth—has seen misery and ruin usurp the place of comfort and happiness—and has heard the very stones beneath his feet cry out for vengeance. Accursed be our oppressors!" he added, lifting up his hands, and elevating his voice. "May their churches be thrown down—their faith crushed—their rights invaded—their children delivered to bondage—their hearts laid waste, as ours have been. May this and worse come to pass, till the whole stock of heresy is uprooted!"

"Hold, father!" exclaimed Viviana; "even here, beholding this miserable sight, and with feelings keenly excited, I cannot join in your terrible denunciation. What I hope for—what I pray for—is toleration, not vengeance. The sufferings of our brethren will not have been in vain, if they enable our successors to worship God in their own way, and according to the dictates of their consciences. The ruthless conduct of our persecutors must be held in as much abhorrence by all good Protestants as our persecution of that sect, when we were in the ascendant, is regarded by all worthy members of our own church. I cannot believe that by persecution we can work out the charitable precepts inculcated by our Saviour; and I am sure such a course is as adverse to the spirit of religion as it is to that of humanity. Let us bear our sorrows with patience, let us utter no repinings, but turn the other cheek to the smiter; and we shall find, in due time, that the hearts of our oppressors will relent, and that all the believers in the True God will be enabled to worship Him in peace, though at different altars."

"Such a season will never arrive, daughter," replied Garnet, severely, "till heresy is extirpated, and the false doctrines now prevailing utterly abolished. Then, indeed, when the Church of Rome is re-established, and the old and true religion restored, universal peace will prevail. And let me correct the grievous and sinful error into which you have fallen. Our church is always at war with heresy; and if it cannot, uproot it by gentle means, authorises, nay enjoins, the employment of force."

"I will not attempt to dispute with you upon points of faith, father," returned Viviana. "I am content to think and act according to my

own feelings and convictions. But I will not give up the hope that, in some milder and wiser age, persecution on either side will cease, and the sufferings of its victims be remembered only to soften the hearts of fanatics, of whatever creed, towards each other. Were a lesson wanting to ourselves, surely it might be found in the result that has attended your dark and criminal enterprise, and in which the disapproval of Heaven has been signally manifested."

"Not so, daughter," replied Garnet. "An action is not to be judged or justified by the event attending it, but by its own intrinsic merits. To aver the contrary were to throw a doubt upon the Holy Scriptures themselves, where we read in the Book of Judges that the eleven tribes of Israel were commanded to make war upon the tribe of Benjamin, and yet were twice defeated. We have failed; but this proves nothing against our project, which I maintain to be righteous and praiseworthy, undertaken to overthrow an heretical and excommunicated monarch, and to re-establish the true faith of the Most High throughout this land."

"I lament to find that you still persist in error, father," replied Viviana; "but you cannot by any sophistry induce me to coincide with you in opinion. I hold the attempt an offence alike against God and man; and while I rejoice at the issue that has attended it, I deplore the irreparable harm it will do to the whole body of Catholics, all of whom will be connected, by the bigoted and unthinking of the hostile party, with the atrocious design. Not only have you done our cause an injury, but you have, in a measure, justified our opponents' severity, and given them a plea for further persecution."

"No more of this, daughter," rejoined Garnet, impatiently, "or I shall deem it necessary to reprove you. Let us search the house, and try to find some habitable chamber in which you can pass the night."

After a long search, they discovered a room in comparatively good order, and, leaving Viviana within it, Garnet descended to the lower part of the house, where he found Nicholas Owen and the two other attendants.

"We have chanced upon a scanty supply of provender for our steeds," remarked Owen, with a doleful look; "but we are not likely to obtain a meal ourselves, unless we can feed upon rats and mice, which appear to be the sole tenants of this miserable dwelling."

"You must go to Manchester instantly, and procure provisions," returned Garnet. "But take heed you observe the utmost caution."

"Fear nothing," replied Owen. "If I am taken, your reverence will lose your supper—that is all."

He then set out upon his errand, and Garnet proceeded to the kitchen, where, to his great surprise, he found the hearthstone still warm, and a few lighted embers upon it, while crumbs of bread, and little fragments of meat scattered about, proved that some one had taken a meal there. Startled by this discovery, he continued his search, but as fruitlessly as before; and though he called to any one who might be hidden to come forth, the summons was unanswered. One of the attendants had placed a few sticks upon the smouldering ashes, and on returning to the kitchen it was found that they had kindled. A fire being thus obtained, some of the broken furniture was used to replenish it, and by Garnet's commands another fire was speedily lighted in Viviana's chamber. Night had now come on, and Owen not returning, Garnet became extremely uneasy, and had almost

given him up, when the absentee made his appearance, with a large basket of provisions under his arm.

"I have had some difficulty in obtaining them," he said; "and fancying I observed two persons following me, was obliged to take a circuitous route to get back. The whole town is in commotion about the plot, and it is said that the most rigorous measures are to be adopted towards all the Catholic families in the neighbourhood." Sighing at the latter piece of intelligence, Garnet selected such provisions as he thought would be acceptable to Viviana, and took them up-stairs to her. She ate a little bread, and drank a cup of water, but refused to taste anything else; and finding it in vain to press her, Garnet returned to the kitchen, where, being much exhausted, he recruited himself with a hearty meal and a cup of wine. Left alone, Viviana knelt down, and clasping a small crucifix to her breast, prayed long and fervently. While she was thus engaged, she heard the door open gently behind her, and turning her head, beheld an old man clothed in a tattered garb, with long white hair flowing over his shoulders, and a beard of the same snowy hue descending upon his breast. As he advanced slowly towards her, she started to her feet, and a brighter flame arising at the moment from the fire, illuminated the intruder's woe-begone features.

"Is it possible!" she exclaimed; "can it be my father's old steward, Jerome Heydocke?"

"It is, indeed, my dear young mistress," replied the old man, falling on his knee before her. "Heaven be praised!" he continued, seizing her hand, and bedewing it with tears, "I have seen you once again, and shall die content."

"I never expected to behold you more, good Heydocke," returned Viviana, raising him. "I heard you had died in prison."

"It was so given out by the gaolers, to account for my escape," replied the old steward; "and I took care never to contradict the report by making my appearance. I will not distress you by the recital of all I have endured, but will simply state that I was confined in the prison upon Hunt's Bank, whence I escaped in the night by dropping upon the rocks, and from them into the river, where it was supposed I was drowned. Making my way into the country, I concealed myself for a time in barns and outbuildings, until, at length, I ventured back to the old house, and have dwelt in it unmolested ever since. I should have perished of want long ago, but for the kindness of Mr. Humphrey Chetham. He used to send my son regularly to me with provisions; and, now that Martin is gone to London, on business, as I understood, relating to you, he brings them to me himself. He will be here to-morrow."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Viviana. "I must see him."

"As you please," returned the old man. "I suppose those are your companions below. I was in my hiding-place, and hearing voices and footsteps, did not dare to venture forth till all was still. On approaching this room, which I have been in the habit of occupying lately, and peeping through the door, which was standing ajar, I perceived a female figure, and thinking it must be you, though I scarcely dared to trust the evidence of my senses, I ventured in. Oh! my dear, dear young mistress, what a joy it is to see you again! I fear you must have suffered much, for you are greatly altered."

At this moment Garnet entered the room. He started on seeing the old steward. But an explanation was instantly given him.

"You, then, are the person by whom the fire was recently lighted in the kitchen?" he asked. Heydocke replied in the affirmative.

"I come to bid you farewell for the night, dear daughter," said Garnet, "and to assure you that you may rest without fear, for we have contrived to make fast the doors. Come with me, my son," he added to the steward, "and you shall have a comfortable meal below."

Making a profound reverence to Viviana, the old man followed him down stairs. Viviana continued to pace to and fro within her chamber for some time, and then, overcome with fatigue, flung herself upon the bedstead, on which a cloak had been thrown. Sleep soon closed her eyes, but it was disturbed by frightful and distressing dreams, from which she was suddenly aroused by a touch upon the arm. Starting up, she perceived the old steward by the side of her couch, with a light in his hand.

"What brings you here, Heydocke?" she demanded, with surprise and alarm.

"You have slept soundly, my dear young mistress, or you would not require to be informed," replied the steward. "There! do you not hear it?" he added, as a loud knocking resounded from below.

Viviana listened for a moment, and then, as if struck by a sudden idea, hurried down stairs. She found Garnet and the others assembled in the hall, but wholly unnerved by fright. "Hide yourselves," she said, "and no ill shall befall you. Quick!—not a moment is to be lost!"

Having allowed them sufficient time for concealment, she demanded in a loud voice who was without?

"Friends," was the reply.

"It is the voice of Doctor Dee," replied Heydocke.

"Indeed!" exclaimed Viviana. "Admit him instantly."

Heydocke obeyed, and throwing open the door, gave entrance to the doctor, who was wrapped in his long furred gown, and carried a lantern. He was accompanied by Kelley and Humphrey Chetham.

"Your visit is singularly timed, Mr. Chetham," said Viviana, after she had saluted the party; "but you are not the less welcome on that account. I much desired to see you, and indeed should have sent for you to-morrow. But how did you know I was here?"

"The only explanation I can offer you is this," replied Chetham. "I was hastily summoned from my residence at Crumpsall by Kelley, who told me you were at Ordsall Hall, and that Doctor Dee was about to visit you, and desired my company. Thus summoned, I came at once."

"A strange explanation, indeed!" replied Viviana.

"Close and fasten the door," said Dee, in an authoritative tone to Kelley; and as soon as his commands were obeyed, he took Viviana's hand, and led her to the further end of the hall.

"My art informed me of your arrival, Viviana," he said. "I am come to save you. You are in imminent danger."

"I well know it," she replied; "but I have no wish to fly from justice. I am weary of my life, and would gladly resign it."

"I would call to your recollection, Viviana," pursued Dee, "that I foretold the disastrous result of this plot, in which you have become unhappily involved, to Guy Fawkes, and warned him not to proceed in it. But he would not be advised, and is now a prisoner in the Tower."

"All I wish is to go thither and die with him," rejoined Viviana.

"If you go thither you will die before him," said Dee.

"I would do so," she replied.

"Viviana Radcliffe," returned Dee, in a compassionate tone, "I truly grieve for you. Your attachment to this heinous traitor completely blinds you. The friendship I entertained for your mother makes me anxious to serve you—to see you happy. It is now in your power to be so. But if you take another false step, your fate is decided, and you will die an early death. I will answer for your safety—nay, what is more, I will undertake that ere long you shall again be mistress of this mansion, and have your estates restored to you."

"You promise fairly, sir," she replied, with a mournful smile.

"I have not yet done," pursued Dee. "All I require for the service is, that when freed by the death of Guy Fawkes from the chain that now binds you—for I am aware of your ill-starred union with him—you shall bestow your hand upon Humphrey Chetham."

"It may not be," replied Viviana, firmly. "And if you could in truth read the secrets of the heart, you would know that mine would instantly reject the proposal."

"Think not it originates with me, Viviana," said Humphrey Chetham, who had approached them unobserved. "My previous experience of your character would alone have prevented me from becoming a party to any such proposal, had I known it would be made. Do not, I beseech you, sir, he added to Dee, "clog your offer with conditions which will effectually prevent its accomplishment."

"You are true to yourself, Mr. Chetham," rejoined Viviana, "and will not, therefore, wonder that I continue so. Were I to assent to Doctor Dee's proposal, I should be further from happiness than I am now, even if he could make good his words, and restore me to the station I have forfeited. I have received a shock from which I shall never recover, and the only haven of repose to which I look forward is the grave."

"Alas!" exclaimed Chetham, in a pitying tone.

"You will think I trespass too much upon your kindness," she pursued; "but you can render me a great service and it will be the last I shall ever require from you."

"Name it!" cried Chetham, eagerly.

"I would beg you to escort me to London," she rejoined; "and to deliver me to the lords of the council. I would willingly escape the indignities to which I shall be exposed if I am conveyed thither as a prisoner. Will you do this?"

"I will," replied Chetham.

"Lest you should think I have offered more than I can perform, Viviana," said Dee, who had listened attentively to the foregoing conversation, "I will now tell you on what grounds I build my expectation of procuring your pardon. The conspiracy was first revealed by me to the Earl of Salisbury, though for his own purposes he kept it secret to the last. He owes me a heavy debt, and shall pay it in the way I propose, if you desire it."

"I will abide by what I have done," replied Viviana.

"You know, then, what fate awaits you?" said Dee.

"I shall not shrink from it," she rejoined.

"It is well," he replied. "Before I leave, I will give you another caution. Father Garnet is here. Nay, attempt not to deny it. You cannot deceive me. Besides, I desire to serve, not harm him. If he remains here till to-morrow, he will be captured. A proclamation b

been issued for his arrest, as well as for that of Father Oldcorne. Deliver him this warning. And now, farewell!"

With this, he took up his lantern, and, followed by Kelley, quitted the hall. Humphrey Chetham only tarried a few moments to inform Viviana that he would return soon after daybreak with a couple of steeds for the journey. As soon as he was gone, Viviana communicated Dee's warning to Garnet, who was so alarmed by it, that he resolved not to delay his own departure a moment. Taking an affectionate leave of Viviana, and confiding her to the care of the old steward, he set out with his three attendants.

Faithful to his promise, Humphrey Chetham appeared at the appointed time. Viviana bade an eternal farewell to the old steward, who was overwhelmed with grief, and looked as if his sorrows would soon be ended, and, mounting one of the steeds brought by the young merchant, they took the direction of London.

CHAPTER VIII.—HENDLIP.

GARNET proceeded at a rapid pace for some miles before he acquainted his companions whither he was going. He then informed Nicholas Owen, who rode by his side, that he should make the best of his way to Hendlip House, the seat of Mr. Thomas Abingdon, near Droitwich, in Worcestershire, where he knew that Father Oldcorne and Anne Vaux had retired, and where he was certain to meet with a friendly reception and protection. Owen, who was completely in his master's confidence, agreed that no safer asylum could be found, and they pursued their journey with so much ardour, that early on the following night they arrived within a short distance of the mansion. Owen was sent forward to reconnoitre, and returned in about half an hour with Mr. Abingdon, who embraced Garnet, and told him he was truly happy in being able to offer him a retreat.

"And I think it will prove a secure one," he added. "There are so many hiding-places in the old house, that if it is beset for a year you will scarcely be discovered. Have you heard of the fate of your confederates?"

"Alas! no, my son," replied Garnet; "and I tremble to ask it."

"It had better be told at once," rejoined Abingdon. "Catesby, Percy, and the two Wrights, have been slain in the defence of Holbeach; while Rookwood, Grant, and Thomas Winter, all of whom were severely wounded in the siege, have been made prisoners, and are now on their way to the Tower."

"A fearful catalogue of ills," exclaimed Garnet.

"It is not yet complete," pursued Abingdon. "Sir Everard Digby has been defeated, and made prisoner in an attempt to bring additional force to his friends, and Keyes has been arrested in Warwickshire."

"These are woful tidings, truly, my son," returned Garnet. "But Heaven's will be done!"

He then dismissed his two attendants, to whom he gave a sum of money, together with the steeds, and, attended by Nicholas Owen, repaired to the house with Mr. Abingdon, who admitted them through a secret door. Hendlip House, which, unfortunately for the lovers of picturesque and storied habitations, was pulled down a few years ago, having been latterly used as a ladies' boarding-school, was a large and irregular

structure, with walls of immense thickness, tall stacks of chimneys, turrets, oriel windows, and numberless projections, contrived to mask the labyrinths and secret chambers within. Erected by John Abingdon, father of the proprietor at the period of this history, and cofferer to Queen Elizabeth in the early part of the reign of that princess, it was filled with secret staircases, masked entrances, trap-doors, vaults, subterranean passages, secret recesses, and every other description of hiding-place. An immense gallery surrounded three sides of the entrance-hall, containing on each side a large chimney-piece, surmounted by a shield displaying the arms of the family—*argent, a bend gules, three eaglets displayed or*. Behind each of these chimney-pieces was a small cell, or "priest's hole," as it was termed, contrived in the thickness of the wall. Throughout the mansion, the chambers were so sombre, and the passages so numerous and intricate, that, in the words of one who described it from personal observation, the whole place presented "a picture of gloom, insecurity, and suspicion." Standing on an elevated situation, it commanded the country on all sides, and could not be approached during the day-time without alarm being given to its inmates.

Thomas Abingdon, the owner of the mansion at the period in question, and the eldest son of its founder, was born at Thorpe, near Chertsey, in Surrey, in 1560. He was educated at Oxford, and finished his studies at the Universities of Paris and Rheims. A man of considerable taste and learning, but of a plotting disposition, he became a willing tool of the Jesuits, and immediately on his return to England connected himself with the different conspiracies set on foot for the liberation of the imprisoned Queen of Scots. For these offences he was imprisoned in the Tower for the term of six years, and only escaped death from the fact of his being the queen's godson, coupled with the estimation in which she had held his father. On his liberation, he remained perfectly tranquil till the accession of James, when he became a secret plotter against that monarch. His concealment of the two priests, about to be related, occasioned his being again sent to the Tower, and if it had not been for the intercession of Lord Mounteagle, whose sister he had espoused, he would have been executed. He was pardoned on condition of never stirring beyond the precincts of Worcestershire, and he employed his retirement in compiling an account of the antiquities of that county, which he left behind him in manuscript, and of which Doctor Nash, its more recent historian, has largely availed himself.

With a habitation so contrived, Mr. Abingdon might fairly promise his guests a safe asylum. Conducting them along a secret passage to a chamber of which he alone possessed the key, he left Garnet within it, and taking Owen with him to another place of concealment, returned shortly afterwards with Anne Vaux and Father Oldcorne. The two priests tenderly embraced each other, and Oldcorne poured forth his tears on his superior's shoulder. Garnet next turned to Anne Vaux, between whom and himself, as has been before mentioned, an affectionate intimacy subsisted, and found her quite overcome by her feelings. Supper was now served to Garnet by a confidential servant, and after a few hours spent in conversation with his friends, during which they discussed the disastrous issue of the affair, and the probable fate of the conspirators, they quitted him, and he retired to re-

—but not before he had returned thanks to Heaven for enabling him once more to lay down his head in safety.

On the following morning he was visited by Mrs. Abingdon, a lady of considerable personal attractions, and Anne Vaux; and when he had recovered from the fatigue of his journey, and the anxieties he had recently undergone, he experienced great delight in their society. The chamber he occupied was lighted by a small loophole, which enabled him to breathe the fresh air, and gaze upon the surrounding country. In this way nearly two months passed on, during which, though rigorous inquiries were made throughout the country, no clue was found by the searchers to lead them to Hendlip; and the concealed parties began to indulge hopes that they should escape detection altogether. Being in constant correspondence with her brother, Lord Mounteagle, though she did not trust him with the important secret of the concealment of the priests, Mrs. Abingdon ascertained all that was done in reference to the conspirators, whose trials were now approaching, and communicated the intelligence to Garnet.

On the morning of the 20th of January, and when long quietude had bred complete fancied security in Garnet, Anne Vaux and Mrs. Abingdon suddenly entered his chamber, and with countenances of the utmost alarm, informed him that Mr. Abingdon's confidential servant had just returned from Worcester, where his master then was, and had brought word that Topcliffe, armed with a search-warrant from the Earl of Salisbury, had just passed through that city on his way to Holt Castle, the residence of Sir Henry Bromley.

"It appears," said Mrs. Abingdon, "that Humphrey Littleton, who has been apprehended and condemned to death at Worcester, for harbouring his brother and Robert Winter, has sought to procure a remission of his sentence by betraying your retreat. In consequence of this, Topcliffe has been sent down from London, with a warrant addressed to Sir Henry Bromley, to aid him in searching Hendlip. My husband has given particular orders that you are to be removed to the most secure hiding-place without delay; and he deeply regrets that he himself cannot return till evening, for fear of exciting suspicion."

"Take me where you please, daughter," replied Garnet, who was thrown into great perturbation by the intelligence. "I thought myself prepared for any emergency. But I was woefully deceived."

"Be not alarmed, father," said Anne Vaux, in an encouraging tone. "Let them search as long as they will, they will never discover your retreat."

"I have a strong presentiment to the contrary," replied Garnet.

At this moment Oldcorne made his appearance, and, on learning the alarming news, was as much dismayed as his superior.

After a short consultation, and while the priests were putting aside every article necessary to be removed, Mrs. Abingdon proceeded to the gallery, and contrived, on some plausible pretext, to send away the whole of the domestics from this part of the house. This done, she hastily returned, and conducted the two priests to one of the large fireplaces.

A raised stone about two feet high occupied the inside of the chimney, and upon it stood an immense pair of iron dogs. Obeying Mrs. Abingdon's directions, Garnet got upon the stone, and setting his foot on the large iron knob on the left, he found a few projections in the masonry on the side, up which he mounted, and opening a small door.

made of planks of wood, covered with bricks, and coloured black, so as not to be distinguishable from the walls of the chimney, crept into a recess contrived in the thickness of the wall. This cell was about two feet wide, and four high, and was connected with another chimney at the back, by means of three or four small holes. Around its sides ran a narrow stone shelf, just wide enough to afford an uncomfortable seat. Garnet was followed by Oldcorne, who brought with him a quantity of books, vestments, and sacred vessels used in the performance of the rites of the Church of Rome. These articles, which afterwards occasioned them much inconvenience, they did not dare to leave behind.

Having seen them safely bestowed, Mrs. Abingdon and her companion went in search of provisions, and brought them a piece of cold meat and a pasty, together with some bread, dried fruit, conserves, and a flask of wine. They did not dare to bring more, for fear of exciting the suspicion of the household. Their next care was to conduct Owen, and Oldcorne's servant, Chambers, to a similar retreat in one of the other chimneys, and to provide them with a scanty supply of provisions and a flask of wine. All this was accomplished without being noticed by any of the domestics.

As may be imagined, a most anxious day was passed by all parties. Towards evening, Sir Henry Bromley, the sheriff of the county, accompanied by Topcliffe, and attended by a troop of soldiers, appeared at the gates of the mansion, and demanded admittance. Just at this moment Mr. Abingdon rode up, and affecting to know nothing of the matter, saluted Sir Henry Bromley, with whom he was on terms of intimacy, and inquired his business.

"You are charged with harbouring two Jesuit priests, Fathers Garnet and Oldcorne, supposed to be connected with the late atrocious conspiracy against the king, Mr. Abingdon," interposed Topcliffe; "and I brought a warrant from the Earl of Salisbury, which I have delivered to Sir Henry Bromley, commanding him to search your house for them."

"I was loth to accept the office, Mr. Abingdon," said Sir Henry Bromley, who was a handsome, middle-aged man, "but my duty to my sovereign allows me no alternative. I trust, though a Catholic, that you share my own detestation of this diabolical plot, and would not shelter any of its contrivers or abettors."

"You judge me rightly, Sir Henry," replied Abingdon, who, meanwhile, had received a private signal from his confidential servant that all was safe, "I would not. I am just returned from Worcester, where I have been for the last two days. Enter my house, I pray you, and search every corner of it; and if you find a Jesuit priest concealed within it, you shall hang me at my own gate."

"You must be misinformed, sir," observed Sir Henry who was completely imposed upon by Abingdon's unconcerned demeanour; "they cannot be here."

"Trust me, they are," returned the other, "and I should like to take him at his word."

Giving directions to the band to environ the house and guard all its approaches, so as to prevent any one from escaping from it, Topcliffe took half-a-dozen men with him, and instructed them how to act. They first repaired to the great dining-chamber, where, in accordance with the instructions received from the Earl of Salisbury, Topcliffe proceeded to the further end of the room, and directed his men to break

down the wainscot. With some difficulty the order was obeyed, and the entrance to a vault discovered, into which Topcliffe descended. But he found nothing to repay his trouble.

Returning to the dining-chamber, he questioned Mr. Abingdon, who secretly enjoyed his disappointment, as to the use of the vault, but the latter professed entire ignorance of its existence. The searchers next proceeded to the cellar, and bored the floors with a broach to a considerable depth, to try whether there were any vaults beneath them, but they made no discovery. Meanwhile Topcliffe hurried up-stairs, and examined the size of the rooms, to see whether they corresponded with those below, and wherever any difference was observable, he caused the panels to be pulled down, and holes broken in the walls. In this way, several secret passages were discovered, one of which led to the chamber lately occupied by Garnet.

Encouraged by this discovery, the searchers continued their operations to a late hour, when they desisted for the night. On the following day they resumed their task, and Sir Henry Bromley took a general survey of the house both externally and internally, noting the appearances outside, and seeing that they corresponded with the rooms within. The three extraordinary chimney-pieces in the gallery attracted Topcliffe's attention; but the contrivances within were so well managed, that they escaped his notice. He even got into the chimneys, and examined the walls on either side, but could detect nothing. And lastly, he ordered large fires to be lighted within them, but the experiment proving fruitless, he turned his attention elsewhere.

Mr. Abingdon had attended him during this part of the search, and though he preserved an unmoved exterior, he was full of apprehension, and was greatly relieved when it was abandoned. In the course of the same day, two other hiding-places were found in the thickness of the walls, but nothing was discovered within them. In order to prevent any communication with the concealed persons, Topcliffe stationed a sentinel at the door of Mr. Abingdon's chamber, and another at that of Anne Vaux. On the third day the search was continued more rigorously than ever. Wainscots were taken down; walls broken open; the boards of the floor removed; and other secret passages, vaults, and hiding-places discovered. Some priests' vestments and articles used in the Romish service were found in one of these places, and shown to Mr. Abingdon. He at first denied all knowledge of them; but when Topcliffe brought forward the title-deeds of his property, which had been found in the same place, he was obliged to confess he had put them there himself. Still, though these discoveries had been made, the searchers were as far from their aim as ever, and Sir Henry Bromley, who began to despair of success, would have departed on the fifth day, if Topcliffe had not prevented him.

"I am certain they are here," said the latter, "and have hit upon plan which cannot fail to bring them forth."

The prisoners, meanwhile, suffered grievously from their confinement, and hearing the searchers knocking against the walls, and even within the chimney, felt certain they should be discovered. Not being able to stand upright, or to stretch themselves within the cell, the sitting posture they were compelled to adopt became, after a time, intolerably irksome. Broths, milk, wine, and other nutritious fluids, were conveyed to them by means of a reed from the adjoining

chimney; but after the fifth day this supply was stopped, as Mrs. Abingdon and Anne Vaux were compelled by Topcliffe to remove to a different part of the house. They now began to experience all the horrors of starvation, and debated whether they should die where they were, or yield themselves up to their enemies. Wretched as their condition was, however, it was not so bad as that of their domestics, Owen and Chambers, whose wants had not been so carefully attended to, and who were now reduced to the most deplorable state. Nor were their friends less uneasy. Aware that the captives, whom there was no means of relieving, for the searchers were constantly on the watch, could not hold out much longer, Mrs. Abingdon consulted with her husband whether it would not be better to reveal their hiding-places; but this he would not permit.

By this time, every secret chamber, vault, and passage in the place, except the actual retreats of the conspirators, had been discovered by Topcliffe, and though nothing material was found, he felt assured, from the uneasiness displayed by Mr. Abingdon and his wife, and above all by Anne Vaux, that it could not be long before his perseverance was rewarded. Though he narrowly watched the two ladies from the first, he could never detect them in the act of conveying food to the captives; but feeling convinced that they did so, he determined to remove them to a different part of the house, and their unwillingness to obey the order confirmed his suspicions.

"We are sure of our prey now," he observed to Sir Henry Bromley. "They must be half-starved by this time, and will speedily surrender themselves."

"Pray Heaven they do so!" returned the other. "I am wearied to death with my long stay here."

"Have a few hours' patience," rejoined Topcliffe, "and you will find that your time has not been thrown away."

And he was right. Soon after midnight, a trooper, who was watching in the gallery, beheld two spectral-looking figures approach him, and appalled by their ghastly appearance, uttered a loud cry. This brought Topcliffe, who was in the hall below, to his aid, and instantly perceiving what was the matter, he ran towards the supposed phantoms, and seized them. The poor wretches, who were no other than Owen and Chambers, and were well-nigh famished, offered no resistance, but would neither confess where they had been hidden, nor who they were. As the trooper had not seen them come forth, though he affirmed with a tremendous oath that they had issued from the floor, the walls were again sounded, but with no result. Food being placed before the captives, they devoured it voraciously; but Topcliffe forbore to question them further that night, feeling confident that he could extract the truth from them on the morrow, either by promises or threats. He was, however, mistaken. They continued as obstinate as before, and when confronted with Mr. Abingdon, denied all knowledge of him; neither would they explain how they got into the house.

Sir Henry Bromley, however, now considered himself justified in placing Mr. Abingdon and his lady under arrest, and Topcliffe redoubled his exertions to discover the hiding-place of the two priests. He examined every part of the gallery most carefully,—took down one of the chimney-pieces (singularly enough, it was the wrong one), but was still unable to discover their retreat.

Meanwhile, the poor wretches inside found it impossible to endure their condition longer. Anything seemed preferable to the lingering and agonising death they were now enduring, and they resolved to delay their surrender no longer. Had they been able to hold out a few hours more, they would have escaped; for Sir Henry Bromley was so fatigued with the search, and so satisfied that nothing further would come of it, that he resolved, notwithstanding Topcliffe's efforts to dissuade him, to depart on the morrow. Of this they were ignorant, and having come to the determination to surrender, Garnet opened the entrance to the chimney, and hearing voices below, and being too feeble to get out unassisted, he called to the speakers for aid. His voice was so hollow, and had such a sepulchral sound, that those who heard it stared at each other in astonishment and affright.

"Who calls?" cried one of the troopers, after a pause.

"One of those you seek," replied Garnet. "Come and help us forth."

Upon hearing this, and ascertaining whence the voice came from, one of the men went to fetch Sir Henry Bromley and Topcliffe, both of whom joyfully obeyed the summons.

"Is it possible they can be in the chimney?" cried Topcliffe. "Why, I myself have examined it twice."

"We are here, nevertheless," replied Garnet, who heard the remark; "and if you would take us alive, lose no time."

The hint was not lost upon Topcliffe. Casting a triumphant look at Bromley, he seized a torch from one of his attendants, and getting into the chimney, soon perceived the entrance to the recess. On beholding his prey, he uttered an exclamation of joy, and the two miserable captives, seeing the savage and exulting grin that lighted up his features, half repented the step they had taken. It was now, however, too late, and Garnet begged him to help them out.

"That I will readily do, father," replied Topcliffe. "You have given us a world of trouble. But you have made ample amends for it now."

"Had we been so minded, you would never have found us," rejoined Garnet. "This cell would have been our sepulchre."

"No doubt," retorted Topcliffe, with a bitter laugh. "But a death on the scaffold is preferable to the horrors of starvation." Finding it impossible to remove Garnet, whose limbs were so cramped that they refused their office, he called to the troopers below to bring a ladder, which was placed in the chimney, and then, with some exertion, he succeeded in getting him down. This done, he supported him towards Sir Henry Bromley, who was standing near a small table in the gallery.

"I told you your time would not be thrown away, Sir Henry," he observed; "here is Father Garnet. It is well you yielded yourself to-night, father," he added, to Garnet, with his customary cynical chuckle, "for Sir Henry had resolved to depart to-morrow."

"Indeed!" groaned Garnet. "Help me to a chair."

While this was passing, Oldcorne was brought down by two of the troopers, and the unfortunate priests were conveyed to an adjoining chamber, where they were placed in a bed, their stiffened limbs chafed, and cordials administered to them. They were reduced, however, to *such extremity of weakness*, that it was not judged prudent to remove *them till the third day*, when they, together with their two servants, *Owen and Chambers*, who were as much enfeebled as themselves, were *conveyed to Worcester*.

CHAPTER IX.—WHITEHALL.

SUCH was the expedition used by Humphrey Chetham and Viviana, that they accomplished the journey to London in an extraordinary short space of time. Proceeding direct to Whitehall, Viviana placed a letter in the hands of a halberdier, and desired that it might be given without delay to the Earl of Salisbury. After some demur, the man handed it to an usher, who promised to lay it before the earl. Some time elapsed before the result of its reception was known, when an officer, accompanied by two sergeants of the guard, made his appearance, and commanded Viviana and her companion to follow him.

Crossing a wide hall, which was filled with the various retainers of the palace, who regarded them with a sort of listless curiosity, and ascending a flight of marble steps, they traversed a long corridor, and were at length ushered into the presence of the Earl of Salisbury. He was seated at a table, covered with a multitude of papers, and was busily employed in writing a despatch, but immediately stopped on their entrance. He was not alone. His companion was a middle-aged man, attired in a suit of black velvet, with a cloak of the same material; but as he sat with his back towards the door, it was impossible to discern his features.

"You may leave us," said Salisbury to the officer, "but remain without."

"And be ready to enter at a moment's notice," added his companion, without altering his position.

The officer bowed, and retired with his followers.

"Your surrender of yourself at this time, Viviana Radcliffe," said the earl, "weighs much in your favour; and if you are disposed freely to declare all you know of the conspiracy, it is not impossible that the king may extend his mercy towards you."

"I do not desire it, my lord," she replied. "In surrendering myself, I have no other aim than to satisfy the laws I have outraged. I do not seek to defend myself, but I desire to offer an explanation to your lordship. Circumstances, which it is needless to detail, drew me into connexion with the conspirators, and I became unwillingly the depository of their dark design."

"You were guilty of misprision of treason in not revealing it," remarked the earl,

"I am aware of it," she rejoined; "but this, I take Heaven to witness, is the extent of my criminality. I held the project in the utmost abhorrence, and used every argument I was mistress of to induce its contrivers to abandon it."

"If such were the case," demanded the earl, "what withheld you from disclosing it?"

"I will now confess what torture could not wring from me before," she replied. "I was restrained from the disclosure by a fatal passion."

"I suspected as much," observed the earl, with a sneer. "For whom?"

"For Guy Fawkes," returned Viviana.

"God's mercy! Guy Fawkes!" ejaculated the earl's companion, starting to his feet. And turning as he spoke, and facing her, he disclosed heavy, but not unintellectual features, now charged with an expression of the utmost astonishment. "Did you say Guy Fawkes, mistress?"

"It is the king," whispered Humphrey Chetham.

"Since I know in whose presence I stand, sire," replied Viviana, "I will answer the interrogation. Guy Fawkes was the cause of my concealing my acquaintance with the plot. And more, I will confess to your majesty, that much as I abhor the design, if he had not been a conspirator, I should never have loved him. His sombre and enthusiastic character first gave him an interest in my eyes, which, heightened by several important services which he rendered me, soon ripened into love. Linked to his fortunes, shrouded by the same gloomy cloud that enveloped him, and bound by a chain from which I could not extricate myself, I gave him my hand. But the moment of our union was the moment of our separation. We have not met since, and shall meet no more, unless to part for ever."

"A strange history!" exclaimed James, in a tone that showed he was not unmoved by the relation.

"I beseech your majesty to grant me one boon," cried Viviana, falling at his feet. "It is to be allowed a single interview with my husband—not for the sad gratification of beholding him again—not for the indulgence of my private sorrows—but that I may endeavour to awaken a feeling of repentance in his breast, and be the means of saving his soul alive."

"My inclinations prompt me to grant the request, Salisbury," said the king, irresolutely. "There can be no risk in doing it—eh?"

"Not under certain restrictions, my liege," replied the earl.

"You shall have your wish, then, mistress," said James, "and I trust your efforts may be crowned with success. Your husband is a hardy traitor—a second Jacques Clement—and we never think of him without the floor shaking beneath our feet, and a horrible smell of gunpowder assailing our nostrils. Blessed be God for our preservation! But whom have we here?" he added, turning to Humphrey Chetham.

"Another conspirator come to surrender himself?"

"No, my liege," replied Chetham; "I am a loyal subject of your majesty, and a stanch Protestant."

"If we may take your word for it, doubtless," replied the king, with an incredulous look. "But how came you in this lady's company?"

"I will hide nothing from your majesty," replied Chetham. "Long before Viviana's unhappy acquaintance with Fawkes—for such I must ever consider it—my affections had been fixed upon her, and I fondly trusted she would not prove indifferent to my suit. Even now, sire, when all hope is dead within me, I have not been able to overcome my passion, but love her as devotedly as ever. When, therefore, she desired my escort to London to surrender herself, I could not refuse the request."

"It is the truth, my liege," added Viviana. "I owe Humphrey Chetham (for so this gentleman is named) an endless debt of gratitude; and not the least of my present distresses is the thought of the affliction I have occasioned him."

"Dismiss it from your mind, then, Viviana," rejoined Chetham. "It will not mitigate my sorrows to feel that I have added to yours."

"Your manners and looks seem to give a warranty for loyalty, young sir," said the king. "But I must have some assurance of the truth of your statement before you are set at large."

"I am your willing prisoner, my liege," returned Chetham. "But I have a letter for the Earl of Salisbury, which may vouch, perhaps, for me."

And as he spoke, he placed a letter in the earl's hands, who broke open the seal, and hastily glanced at its contents.

"It is from Doctor Dee," he said, "from whom, as your majesty is aware, we have received much important information relative to this atrocious design. He answers for this young man's loyalty."

"I am glad to hear it," rejoined the king. "It would have been mortifying to be deceived by so honest a physiognomy."

"Your majesty will be pleased to attach your signature to this warrant for Viviana Radcliffe's committal to the Tower," said Salisbury, placing a paper before him.

James complied, and the earl summoned the guard.

"Have I your majesty's permission to attend this unfortunate lady to the fortress?" cried Chetham, prostrating himself before the king.

James hesitated, but glancing at the earl, and reading no objection in his looks, he assented. Whispering some private instructions to the officer respecting Chetham, Salisbury delivered the warrant to him. Viviana and her companion were then removed to a small chamber adjoining the guard-room, where they remained for nearly an hour, at the expiration of which time the officer again appeared, and conducted them to the palace-stairs, where a large wherry awaited them, in which they embarked. James did not remain long with his councillor, and as soon as he had retired, Salisbury summoned a confidential attendant, and told him to acquaint Lord Mounteagle, who was in an adjoining apartment, that he was now able to receive him. The attendant departed, and presently returned with the nobleman in question. As soon as they were alone, and Salisbury had satisfied himself they could not be overheard, he observed to the other,

"Since Tresham's committal to the Tower yesterday, I have received a letter from the lieutenant, stating that he breathes nothing but revenge against yourself and me, and threatens to betray us, if he is not released. It will not do to let him be examined by the council; for though we can throw utter discredit on his statement, it may be prejudicial to my future designs."

"True, my lord," replied Mounteagle. "But how do you propose to silence him?"

"By poison," returned Salisbury. "There is a trusty fellow in the Tower, a gaoler named Ipgreve, who will administer it to him. Here is the powder," he added, unlocking the coffer, and taking out a small packet; "it was given me by its compounder, Doctor Dee. It is the same, I am assured, as the celebrated Italian poison prepared by Pope Alexander the Sixth; is without scent or taste; and destroys its victim without leaving a trace of its effects."

"I must take heed how I offend your lordship," observed Mounteagle.

"Nay," rejoined Salisbury, with a ghastly smile, "it is for traitors like Tresham, not true men like you, to fear me."

"I understand the distinction, my lord," replied the other.

"I must intrust the entire management of this affair to you," pursued Salisbury.

"To me!" exclaimed Mounteagle. "Tresham is my brother-in-law. I can take no part in his murder."

"If he lives, you are ruined," rejoined Salisbury, coldly. "You must sacrifice him or yourself. But I see you are reasonable. Take this powder, and proceed to the Tower. See Ipgreve alone, and

instruct him to drug Tresham's wine with it. A hundred marks shall be his reward when the deed is done."

"My soul revolts from the deed," said Mounteagle, as he took the packet. "Is there no other way of silencing him?"

"None whatever," replied Salisbury, sternly. "His blood be upon his own head." With this Mounteagle took his departure.

CHAPTER X.—THE PARTING OF VIVIANA AND HUMPHREY CHETHAM.

HUMPHREY CHETHAM was so oppressed by the idea of parting with Viviana, that he did not utter a single word during their transit to the Tower. Passing beneath the gloomy archway of Traitor's Gate, they mounted the fatal steps, and were conducted to the guard-room near the By-ward Tower. The officer then despatched one of the warders to inform the lieutenant of Viviana's arrival; and telling Humphrey Chetham he would allow him a few minutes to take leave of her, considerably withdrew, and left them alone together.

"Oh, Viviana!" exclaimed Chetham, unable to repress his grief, "my heart bleeds to see you here. If you repent the step you have taken, and desire freedom, say so, and I will use every effort to liberate you. I have been successful once, and may be so again."

"I thank you for your devotion," she replied, in a tone of profound gratitude; "but you have rendered me the last service I shall ever require of you. I deeply deplore the misery I have occasioned you, and regret my inability to requite your attachment as it deserves to be requited. My last prayers shall be for your happiness; and I trust you will meet with some being worthy of you, and who will make amends for my insensibility."

"Be not deceived, Viviana," replied Chetham, in a broken voice; "I shall never love again. Your image is too deeply imprinted upon my heart ever to be effaced."

"Time may work a change," she rejoined; "though I ought not to say so, for I feel it would work none in me. Suffer me to give you one piece of counsel. Devote yourself resolutely to the business of life, and you will speedily regain your peace of mind."

"I will follow your instructions implicitly," replied Chetham, "but have little hope of the result you promise me."

"Let the effort be made," she rejoined. "And now promise me to quit London to-morrow. Return to your native town; employ yourself in your former occupations; and strive not to think of the past, except as a troubled dream from which you have fortunately awakened. Do not let us prolong our parting, or your resolution may waver. Farewell!" So saying, she extended her hand towards him, and he pressed it passionately to his lips.

"Farewell, Viviana!" he cried, with a look of unutterable anguish.

"May Heaven support you in your trials!"

"One of them I am now enduring," she replied, in a broken voice.

"Farewell for ever, and may all good angels bless you!"

At this moment the officer appeared, and, announcing the approach of the lieutenant, told Chetham that his time had expired. Without *hazarding another look at Viviana*, the young merchant tore himself away, and followed the officer out of the Tower.

Obedient to Viviana's last request, he quitted London on the follow-

ing day, and, acting upon her advice, devoted himself, on his return to Manchester, sedulously to his mercantile pursuits. His perseverance and integrity were crowned with entire success, and he became, in due season, the wealthiest merchant of the town. But the blighting of his early affections tinged his whole life, and gave a melancholy to his thoughts and an austerity to his manner originally foreign to them. True to his promise, he died unmarried. His long and worthy career was marked by actions of the greatest benevolence. In proportion as his means increased, his charities were extended, and he truly became "a father to the fatherless and the destitute." To him the town of Manchester is indebted for the noble library and hospital bearing his name; and for these admirable institutions, by which they so largely benefit, his memory must ever be held in veneration by its inhabitants.

CHAPTER XI.—THE SUBTERRANEAN DUNGEON.

REGARDING Viviana with a smile of savage satisfaction, Sir William Waad commanded Jasper Ipgreve, who accompanied him, to convey her to one of the subterranean dungeons below the Devereux Tower.

"She cannot escape thence without your connivance," he said; "and you shall answer to me for her safe custody with your life."

"If she escapes again, your worship shall hang me in her stead," rejoined Ipgreve.

"My instructions from the Earl of Salisbury state that it is the king's pleasure that she be allowed a short interview with Guy Fawkes," said the lieutenant, in a low tone. "Let her be taken to his cell to-morrow."

The gaoler bowed, and motioning the guard to follow him with Viviana, he led the way along the inner ward till he arrived at a small, strong door, in the wall, a little to the north of the Beauchamp Tower, which he unlocked, and descended into a low cavernous-looking vault. Striking a light, and setting fire to a torch, he then led the way along a narrow gloomy passage, which brought them to a circular chamber, from which other passages diverged, and, selecting one of them, threaded it till he came to the door of a cell.

"Here is your dungeon," he said to Viviana, as he drew back the heavy bolts, and disclosed a small chamber, about four feet wide and six long, in which there was a pallet. "My dame will attend you soon."

With this, he lighted a lamp, and departing with the guard, barred the door outside. Viviana shuddered as she surveyed the narrow dungeon in which she was placed. Roof, walls, and floor were of stone; and the aspect of the place was so dismal and tomb-like, that she felt as if she were buried alive. Some hours elapsed before Dame Ipgreve made her appearance. She was accompanied by Ruth, who burst into tears on beholding Viviana. The gaoler's wife had brought a few blankets and other necessities with her, together with a loaf of bread and a jug of water. While disposing the blankets on the couch, she never ceased upbraiding Viviana for her former flight. Poor Ruth, who was compelled to assist her mother, endeavoured by her gestures and looks to convey to the unfortunate captive that she was as much devoted to her as ever. Their task completed, the old woman withdrew, and her daughter, casting a deeply commiserating look at Viviana, followed her, and the door was barred without. Determined not to

yield to despondency, Viviana knelt down, and addressed herself to Heaven; and, comforted by her prayers, threw herself on the bed, and sank into a peaceful slumber. She was awakened by hearing the bolts of her cell withdrawn, and the next moment Ruth stood before her.

"I fear you have exposed yourself to great risk in thus visiting me," said Viviana, tenderly embracing her.

"I would expose myself to any risk for you, sweet lady," replied Ruth. "But, oh! why do I see you here again? The chief support of Guy Fawkes during his sufferings has been the thought that you were at liberty."

"I surrendered myself in the hope of beholding him again," rejoined Viviana.

"You have given a fond, but fatal proof of your affection," returned Ruth. "The knowledge that you are a captive will afflict him more than all the torments he has endured."

"What torments *has* he endured, Ruth?" inquired Viviana, with a look of anguish.

"Do not ask me to repeat them," replied the gaoler's daughter. "They are too dreadful to relate. When you behold his shattered frame and altered looks, you will comprehend what he has undergone."

"Alas!" exclaimed Viviana, bursting into tears, "I almost fear to behold him."

"You must prepare for a fearful shock," returned Ruth. "And now, madam, I must take my leave. I will endeavour to see you again tomorrow, but dare not promise to do so. I should not have been able to visit you now, but that my father is engaged with Lord Mounteagle."

"With Lord Mounteagle!" cried Viviana. "Upon what business?"

"Upon a foul business," rejoined Ruth. "No less than the destruction of Mr. Tresham, who is now a prisoner in the Tower. Lord Mounteagle came to the Well Tower this evening, and I accidentally overheard him propose to my father to administer poison to the person I have named."

"I do not pity their victim," returned Viviana. "He is a double-dyed traitor, and will meet with the fate he deserves."

"Farewell, madam," said Ruth. "If I do not see you again, you will know that you have one friend in this fortress who deeply sympathises with your afflictions." So saying, she withdrew, and Viviana heard the bolts slipped gently into their sockets.

Vainly, after Ruth's visit, did she try to compose herself. Sleep fled her eyes, and she was haunted all night by the image of Fawkes, haggard and shattered by torture, as he had been described by the gaoler's daughter. Day and night were the same to her, and she could only compute the progress of time by her own feelings, judging by which, she supposed it to be late in the day when she was again visited. The bolts of her cell being withdrawn, two men, clad in long black gowns, and having hoods drawn over their faces, entered it. They were followed by Ipgreve; and Viviana, concluding she was about to be led to the torture, endeavoured to string herself to its endurance. Though he guessed what was passing in her breast, Jasper Ipgreve did not care to undeceive her, but motioning the hooded officials to follow him with her, quitted the cell. Seizing each a hand, the attendants led her after him along a number of intricate passages, until he stopped before the door of a cell, which he opened.

"Be brief in what you have to say," he cried, thrusting her forward. "I shall not allow you much time."

Viviana no sooner set foot in the cell than she felt in whose presence she stood. On a stool at the further end of the narrow chamber, with his head upon his breast, and a cloak wrapped around his limbs, sat Fawkes. A small iron lamp, suspended by a rusty chain from the ceiling, served to illumine his ghastly features. He lifted his eyes from the ground on her entrance, and, recognising her, uttered a cry of anguish. Raising himself by a great effort, he opened his arms, and she rushed into them. For some moments both continued silent. Grief took away their utterance; but, at length, Guy Fawkes spoke.

"My cup of bitterness was not sufficiently full," he said. "This alone was wanting to make it overflow."

"I fear you will blame me," she replied, "when you learn that I have voluntarily surrendered myself."

Guy Fawkes uttered a deep groan.

"I am the cause of your doing so," he said.

"You are so," she replied. "But you will forgive me when you know my motive. I came here to urge you to repentance. Oh! if you hope that we shall meet again hereafter—if you hope that we shall inherit joys which will requite us for all our troubles, you will employ the brief time left you on earth in imploring forgiveness for your evil intentions."

"Having had no evil intentions," replied Fawkes, coldly, "I have no pardon to ask."

"The Tempter who led you into the commission of sin under the semblance of righteousness, puts these thoughts into your heart," replied Viviana. "You have escaped the commission of an offence which must have deprived you of the joys of heaven, and I am thankful for it. But if you remain impenitent, I shall tremble for your salvation."

"My account will soon be settled with my Maker," rejoined Fawkes; "and He will punish or reward me according to my deserts. I have acted according to my conscience, and can never repent that which I believe to be a righteous design."

"But do you not now see that you were mistaken?" returned Viviana; "do you not perceive that the sword which you raised against others has been turned against yourself, and that the Great Power whom you serve and worship has declared Himself against you?"

"You seek in vain to move me," replied Fawkes. "I am as insensible to your arguments as to the tortures of my enemies."

"Then Heaven have mercy upon your soul!" she rejoined.

"Look at me, Viviana," cried Fawkes, "and behold the wreck I am. What has supported me amid my tortures—in this dungeon—in the presence of my relentless foes?—what, but the consciousness of having acted rightly? And what will support me on the scaffold except the same conviction? If you love me, do not seek to shake my faith. But it is idle to talk thus. You cannot do so. Rest satisfied we shall meet again. Everything assures me of it. Wretched as I appear in this solitary cell, I am not wholly miserable, because I am buoyed up by the certainty that my actions are approved by Heaven."

"I will not attempt to destroy the delusion, since it is productive of happiness to you," replied Viviana. "But if my earnest, heartfelt prayers can conduce to your salvation, they shall not be wanting."

As she spoke the door of the cell was opened by Jasper Igpre

who stepped towards her, and seized her roughly by the hand. "Your time has expired, mistress," he said; "you must come with me."

"A minute longer," implored Fawkes.

"Not a second," replied Ipgreve.

"Shall we not meet again?" cried Viviana, distractedly.

"Ay, the day before your execution," rejoined Ipgreve. "I have good news for you," he added, pausing for a moment, and addressing Fawkes. "Mr. Tresham, who I told you has been brought to the Tower, has been taken suddenly and dangerously ill."

"If the traitor perishes before me, I shall die content," observed Fawkes.

"Then rest assured of it," said Viviana. "The task of vengeance is already fulfilled."

She was then forced away by Ipgreve, and delivered by him to the hooded officials outside, who hurried her back to her dungeon.

CHAPTER XII.—THE TRAITOR BETRAYED.

LORD MOUNTEAGLE arrived at the Tower shortly after Viviana, and repairing at once to the lieutenant's lodgings, had a brief conference with him, and informed him that he had a secret order to deliver to Jasper Ipgreve, from the Earl of Salisbury, touching the conspirators. Sir William Waad would have summoned the gaoler; but Mounteagle preferred visiting him at the Well Tower, and accordingly proceeded thither. He found Ipgreve with his wife and daughter, and telling him he desired a moment's private speech with him, the gaoler dismissed them. Suspecting that the new comer's errand related in some way to Viviana, Ruth contrived to place herself in such a situation that she could overhear what passed. A moment's scrutiny of Jasper's villainous countenance satisfied Mounteagle that the Earl of Salisbury was not mistaken in his man; and, as soon as he supposed they were alone, he unhesitatingly opened his plan to him. As he expected, Jasper exhibited no reluctance to undertake it; and, after some further discussion, it was agreed to put it in execution without delay.

"The sooner Mr. Tresham is silenced the better," said Jasper; "for he threatens to make disclosures to the council that will bring some noble persons," with a significant look at Mounteagle, "into trouble."

"Where is he confined?" demanded the other.

"In the Beauchamp Tower," replied Ipgreve.

"I will visit him at once," said Mounteagle; "and when I have conferred with him, will call for wine. Bring two goblets, and in that which you give to Tresham place this powder."

Ipgreve nodded assent, and with a grim smile took the packet. Shortly after this they quitted the Well Tower together, and passing under the archway of the Bloody Tower, crossed the Green, and entered the fortification in which the traitor was confined. Tresham was treated with far greater consideration than the other conspirators, being allowed the use of the large room on the upper floor of the *Beauchamp Tower*, which was seldom allotted to any persons except *those of the highest distinction*. When they entered, he was *pacing to and fro within his chamber in great agitation*, but he immediately *stopped on seeing Mounteagle*, and rushed towards him.

"You bring me my liberation?" he said.

"It is impossible to effect it at present," returned the other. "But make yourself perfectly easy. Your confinement will not be of long duration."

"I will not be trifled with," cried Tresham, furiously. "If I am examined by the council, look to yourselves. As I hope for salvation, the truth shall out."

"Leave us," said Mounteagle, with a significant look at the gaoler, who quitted the chamber.

"Hark'e, Mounteagle," said Tresham, as soon as they were alone; "I have been your tool thus far. But if you propose to lead me blindfold to the scaffold, you are greatly mistaken. You think that you have me safe within these walls; that my voice cannot be heard; and that I cannot betray you. But you are deceived—fearfully deceived, as you will find. I have your letters—the Earl of Salisbury's letters, proving that you were both aware of the plot—and that you employed me to watch its progress, and report it to you. I have also letters from Doctor Dee, the warden of Manchester, detailing his acquaintance with the conspiracy, and containing descriptions of the persons of Fawkes and Catesby, which I showed to the Earl of Salisbury. These letters are now in my possession, and I will deliver them to the council, if I am not released."

"Deliver them to me, and I swear to you, you shall be set free," said Mounteagle.

"I will not trust you," rejoined Tresham. "Liberate me, and they are yours. But I will not rob myself of vengeance. I will confound you and the false Earl of Salisbury."

"You wrong us both by your unjust suspicions," said Mounteagle.

"Wrong you!" echoed Tresham, contemptuously. "Where is my promised reward? Why am I in this dungeon? Why am I treated like a traitor? If you meant me fairly, I should not be here, but like yourself at liberty, and in the enjoyment of the king's favour. But you have duped me, villain, and shall rue it. If I am led to the scaffold, it shall be in your company."

"Compose yourself," rejoined Mounteagle, calmly. "Appearances, I own, are against us. But circumstances render it imperatively necessary that the Earl of Salisbury should *appear* to act against you. You have been charged by Guy Fawkes, when under the torture, of being a confederate in the design, and your arrest could not be avoided. I am come hither to give you a solemn assurance that no harm shall befall you, but that you shall be delivered from your thralldom in a few days—perhaps in a few hours."

"You have no further design against me?" said Tresham, suspiciously.

"What motive could I have in coming hither, except to set your mind at rest?" rejoined Mounteagle.

"And I shall receive my reward?" demanded Tresham.

"You will receive your reward," returned Mounteagle, with significant emphasis. "I swear it. So make yourself easy."

"If I thought I might trust you, I should not heed my imprisonment, irksome though it be," rejoined Tresham.

"It cannot be avoided, for the reasons I have just stated," replied Mounteagle. "But come, no more despondency. All will be w

with you speedily. Let us drown care in a bumper. What ho! gaoler," he added, opening the door, "a cup of wine!"

In a few minutes Ipgreve made his appearance, bearing two goblets filled with wine on a salver, one of which he presented to Mounteagle, and the other to Tresham.

"Here is to your speedy deliverance from captivity!" said Mounteagle, draining the goblet. "You will not refuse that pledge, Tresham?"

"Of a surety not," replied the other. "To my speedy deliverance!" And he emptied the cup, while Mounteagle and the gaoler exchanged significant glances.

"And now, having fully discharged my errand, I must bid you farewell," said Mounteagle.

"You will not forget your promise?" observed Tresham.

"Assuredly not," replied the other. "A week hence, and you will make no complaint against me. Are you sure you did not give me the wrong goblet?" he added to Ipgreve, as they descended the spiral staircase.

"Quite sure, my lord," returned the gaoler, with a grim smile.

Mounteagle immediately quitted the Tower, and hastening to Whitehall, sought out the Earl of Salisbury, to whom he related what he had done. The earl complimented him on his skilful management of the matter; and congratulating each other upon having got rid of a dangerous, and now useless instrument, they separated.

On the following day, Tresham was seized with a sudden illness, and making known his symptoms to Ipgreve, the chirurgeon who attended the prison was sent for, and on seeing him pronounced him dangerously ill, though he was at a loss to explain the nature of his disorder. Every hour the sick man grew worse, and he was torn with racking pains. Connecting his sudden seizure with the visit of Lord Mounteagle, an idea of the truth flashed upon him, and he mentioned his suspicions to the chirurgeon, charging Jasper Ipgreve with being accessory to the deed. The gaoler stoutly denied the accusation, and charged the prisoner, in his turn, with making a malicious statement to bring him into discredit.

"I will soon test the truth of his assertion," observed the chirurgeon, taking a small flat piece of the purest gold from his doublet. "Place this in your mouth." Tresham obeyed, and Ipgreve watched the experiment with gloomy curiosity. "You are a dead man," said the chirurgeon to Tresham, as he drew forth the piece of gold, and perceived that it was slightly tarnished. "Poison *has* been administered to you."

"Is there no remedy—no counter-poison?" demanded Tresham, eagerly. The chirurgeon shook his head.

"Then let the lieutenant be summoned," said Tresham; "I have an important confession to make to him. I charge this man," pointing to the gaoler, "with giving poisoned wine to me. Do you hear what I say to you?"

"I do," replied the chirurgeon.

"But he will never reveal it," said Ipgreve, with great unconcern. "*I have a warrant from the Earl of Salisbury for what I have done.*"

"*What!*" cried Tresham, "can murder be committed here with impunity?"

"*You have to thank your own indiscretion for what has happened,*

rejoined Ipgreve. "Had you kept a close tongue in your head, you would have been safe."

"Can nothing be done to save me?" cried the miserable man, with an imploring look at the chirurgeon.

"Nothing whatever," replied the person appealed to. "I would advise you to recommend your soul to God."

"Will you not inform the lieutenant that I desire to speak with him?" demanded Tresham.

The chirurgeon glanced at Ipgreve, and receiving a sign from him, gave a promise to that effect. They then quitted the cell together, leaving Tresham in a state of indescribable agony both of mind and body. Half an hour afterwards the chirurgeon returned, and informed him that the lieutenant refused to visit him, or to hear his confession, and wholly discredited the fact of his being poisoned.

"I will take charge of your papers, if you choose to commit them to me," he said, "and will lay them before the council."

"No," replied Tresham; "while life remains to me I will never part with them."

"I have brought you a mixture which, though it cannot heal you, will, at least, allay your sufferings," said the chirurgeon.

"I will not take it," groaned Tresham. "I distrust you as much as the others."

"I will leave it with you, at all events," rejoined the chirurgeon, setting down the phial.

The noise of the bolts shot into their sockets sounded to Tresham as if his tomb were closed upon him, and he uttered a cry of anguish. He would have laid violent hands upon himself, and accelerated his own end, but he wanted courage to do so, and continued to pace backwards and forwards across his chamber as long as his strength lasted. He was about to throw himself on the couch, from which he never expected to rise again, when his eyes fell upon the phial.

"What if it should be poison!" he said, "it will end my sufferings the sooner." And placing it to his lips, he swallowed its contents. As the chirurgeon had foretold, it alleviated his sufferings, and throwing himself on the bed he sank into a troubled slumber, during which he dreamed that Catesby appeared to him with a vengeful countenance, and tried to drag him into a fathomless abyss that yawned beneath their feet. Shrieking with agony, he awoke, and found two persons standing by his couch. One of them was the gaoler, and the other appeared, from his garb, to be a priest; but a hood was drawn over his head so as to conceal his features.

"Are you come to witness my dying pangs, or to finish me?" demanded Tresham of the gaoler.

"I am come for neither purpose," replied Ipgreve. "I pity your condition, and have brought you a priest of your own faith, who like yourself is a prisoner in the Tower. I will leave him with you, but he cannot remain long, so make the most of your time."

And with these words he retired.

When he was gone, the supposed priest, who spoke in feeble and faltering accents, desired to hear Tresham's confession, and having listened to it, gave him absolution. The wretched man then drew from his bosom a small packet, and offered it to the confessor, who eagerly received it.

"This contains the letters of the Earl of Salisbury and Lord Mounteagle, which I have just mentioned," he said. "I pray you lay them before the privy council."

"I will not fail to do so," replied the confessor. And reciting the prayer for one *in extremis* over the dying man, he departed.

"I have obtained the letters from him," said Mounteagle, throwing back his hood as he quitted the chamber, and addressing the gaoler. "And now you need give yourself no further concern about him; he will be dead before morning."

Jasper Ipgreve locked the door upon the prisoner, and proceeded to the Well Tower. When he returned he found Mounteagle's words had come to pass. Treham was lying on the floor, quite dead—his collapsed frame and distorted countenance showing the agonies in which he must have expired.

CHAPTER XIII.—THE TRIAL.

THE trial of the conspirators, which had been delayed in order that full evidence might be procured against them, was, at length, appointed to take place in Westminster Hall, on Monday, the 27th of January, 1606. Early on the morning of this day, the eight surviving confederates (Garnet and Oldcorne being at this time secreted at Hendlip) were conveyed in two large covered wherries from the fortress to the place of trial. In spite of the severity of the weather—it was snowing heavily, and the river was covered with sheets of ice—they were attended by a vast number of boats filled with persons anxious to obtain a sight of them. Such was the abhorrence in which the actors in the conspiracy were held by the populace, that, not content with menaces and execrations, many of these persons hurled missiles against the wherries, and would have proceeded to further violence if they had not been restrained by the pikemen. When the prisoners landed, a tremendous and fearful shout was raised by the mob stationed at the head of the stairs, and it required the utmost efforts of the guard to protect them from injury. Two lines of soldiers, with calivers on their shoulders, were drawn out from the banks of the river to the entrance of the Hall, and between them the conspirators marched.

The melancholy procession was headed by Sir William Waad, who was followed by an officer of the guard and six halberdiers. Then came the executioner, carrying the gleaming implement of death with its edge turned from the prisoners. He was followed by Sir Everard Digby, whose noble figure and handsome countenance excited much sympathy among the beholders, and Ambrose Rookwood. Next came the two Winters, both of whom appeared greatly dejected. Next, John Grant and Robert Bates—Catesby's servant, who had been captured at Holbeach. And lastly, Keyes and Fawkes.

Bitterly and justly incensed as were the multitude against the conspirators, their feelings underwent some change as they beheld the haggard countenance and shattered frame of Guy Fawkes. It was soon understood that he was the individual who had been found in the vault *near the parliament-house*, with the touchwood and matches in his belt *ready to fire the train*; and the greatest curiosity was exhibited to see him. Just as the foremost of the conspirators reached the entrance of the Hall, a terrific yell, resembling nothing human, except the roar of a thousand tigers thirsting for blood, was uttered by the mob, and a tre-

menacious but ineffectual attempt was made to break through the lines of the guard. Never before had so large an assemblage been collected on the spot. The whole of the space extending on one hand from Westminster Hall to the gates of Whitehall, and on the other to the Abbey, was filled with spectators; and every roof, window, and buttress was occupied. Nor was the interior of the Hall less crowded. Not an inch of room was unoccupied; and it was afterwards complained in parliament, that the members of the house had been so pressed and incommoded, that they could not hear what was said at the arraignment.

The conspirators were first conveyed to the court of the Star Chamber, where they remained till the lords commissioners had arrived and taken their seats. The commissioners were the Earl of Nottingham, lord high admiral of England; the Earl of Suffolk, steward of the household; the Earl of Worcester, master of the horse; the Earl of Devonshire, master of the ordnance; the Earl of Northampton, warden of the Cinque-Ports; the Earl of Salisbury, principal secretary of state; Sir John Popham, lord chief justice; Sir Thomas Fleming, lord chief baron of the Exchequer; and Sir Thomas Walmisley and Sir Peter Warburton, knights, and both justices of the Common Pleas.

Summoned by an usher, the conspirators were conducted to a platform covered with black cloth, which had been erected at the lower end of the Hall. A murmur of indignation, vainly sought to be repressed by the grave looks of the commissioners, burst from the immense assemblage, as they one by one ascended the steps of the platform. Guy Fawkes was the last to mount, and his appearance was followed by a deep groan. Supporting himself against the rail of the scaffold, he surveyed the assemblage with a stern and undaunted look. As he gazed around, he could not help marvelling at the vast multitude before him. The whole of the peers, and all the members of the House of Commons, were present, while in a box on the left, though screened by a lattice, sat the queen and Prince Henry; and in another on the right, and protected in the same way, the king and his courtiers.

Silence being peremptorily commanded, the indictment was read, wherein the prisoners were charged with conspiring to blow up the king and the peers with gunpowder, and with attempting to incite the Papists, and other persons, to open rebellion; to which all the conspirators, to the no small surprise of those who heard them, and were aware that they had subscribed their confessions, pleaded not guilty.

"How, sir!" cried the lord chief justice, in a stern tone, to Fawkes. "With what face can you pretend to deny the indictment, when you were actually taken in the cellar with the powder, and have already confessed your treasonable intentions?"

"I do not mean to deny what I have confessed, my lord," replied Fawkes; "but this indictment contains many matters which I neither can nor will countenance by assent or silence. And I therefore deny it."

"It is well," replied the lord chief justice. "Let the trial proceed."

The indictment being opened by Sir Edward Philips, serjeant-at-law, he was followed by Sir Edward Coke, the attorney-general, who, in an eloquent and elaborate speech, which produced an extraordinary effect upon the assemblage, expatiated upon the monstrous nature of the plot, which he characterised as "the greatest treason that ever was plotted in England, and against the greatest king that ever reigned in England;" and after narrating the origin and progress of the con-

racy, concluded by desiring that the confessions of the prisoners should be openly read. This done, the jury were ordered by the lord chief justice to retire, and the injunction being obeyed, they almost instantly returned with a verdict of guilty.

A deep, dread silence then prevailed throughout the Hall, and every eye was bent upon the conspirators, all of whom maintained a composed demeanour. They were then questioned by the lord chief justice whether they had anything to say why judgment of death should not be pronounced against them.

"All I have to crave of your lordships," said Thomas Winter, "is, that, being the chief offender of the two, I may die for my brother and myself."

"And I ask only that my brother's request may not be granted," said Robert Winter. "If he is condemned, I do not desire to live."

"I have nothing to solicit—not even pardon," said Keyes, carelessly. "My fortunes were always desperate, and are better now than they have ever been."

"I desire mercy," said Rookwood, "not from any fear of death, but because so shameful an ending will leave a perpetual stain upon my name and blood. I humbly submit myself to the king, and pray him to imitate our Supreme Judge, who sometimes punishes corporally, but not mortally."

"I have been guilty of a conspiracy, intended, but never effected," said John Grant, "and solicit forgiveness on that plea."

"My crime has been fidelity to my master," said Bates. "If the king will let me live, I will serve him as faithfully as I did Mr. Catesby."

"I would not utter a word," said Fawkes, looking sternly round, "if I did not fear my silence might be misinterpreted. I would not accept a pardon if it were offered me. I regard the project as a glorious one, and only lament its failure."

"Silence the vile traitor," said the Earl of Salisbury, rising.

And as he spoke, two halberdiers sprang up the steps of the scaffold, and placing themselves on either side of Fawkes, prepared to gag him.

"I have done," he said, contemptuously regarding them.

"I have nothing to say, save this," said Sir Everard Digby, bowing to the judges. "If any of your lordships will tell me you forgive me, I shall go more cheerfully to the scaffold."

"Heaven forgive you, Sir Everard," said the Earl of Nottingham, returning his reverence, "as we do."

"I humbly thank your lordship," replied Digby.

Sentence was then passed upon the prisoners by Lord Chief Justice Popham, and they were removed from the platform.

As they issued from the Hall, and it became known to the assemblage without that they were condemned, a shout of fierce exultation rent the air, and they were so violently assailed on all sides that they had great difficulty in reaching the wherries. The guard, however, succeeded, at length, in accomplishing their embarkation, and they were conveyed back in safety to the Tower.

CHAPTER XIV.—THE LAST MEETING OF FAWKES AND VIVIANA.
Up to this time Viviana had not been allowed another interview with Fawkes. She was twice interrogated by the privy council, but

having confessed all she knew of the conspiracy, excepting what might implicate Garnet and Oldcorne, neither of whom she was aware had been apprehended, she was not again subjected to the torture. Her health, however, rapidly sank under her confinement, and she was soon reduced to such an extreme state of debility that she could not leave her bed. The surgeon having been called in by Dame Ipgreve to attend her, reported her condition to Sir William Waad, who directed that every means should be adopted for her restoration, and that Ruth Ipgreve should remain in constant attendance upon her.

Ascertaining all particulars relative to Guy Fawkes from the gaoler's daughter, it was a sad satisfaction to Viviana to learn that he spent his whole time in devotion, and appeared completely resigned to his fate. It had been the Earl of Salisbury's purpose to bring Viviana to trial at the same time as the rest of the conspirators, but the surgeon reporting that her removal at this juncture would be attended with fatal consequences, he was compelled to defer it.

When the result of the trial was made known to Viviana by Ruth, though she had anticipated the condemnation of Guy Fawkes, she swooned away, and, on her recovery, observed to Ruth, who was greatly alarmed at her looks, "I feel I am going fast. I should wish to see my husband once before I die."

"I fear it is impossible, madam," replied Ruth; "but I will try to accomplish it."

"Do so," rejoined Viviana, "and my blessing shall rest ever on your head."

"Have you any valuable?" inquired Ruth. "My heart bleeds to make the demand at such a moment. But it is the only way to produce an effect on the avaricious nature of my father."

"I have nothing but this golden crucifix," said Viviana, "and I meant to give it to you."

"It will be better employed in this way," rejoined Ruth, taking it from her.

Quitting the cell, she hurried to the Well Tower, and found her father, who had just returned from locking up the conspirators in their different dungeons, sitting down to his evening meal.

"What is the matter with the wench?" he cried, staring at her. "You look quite distracted. Is Viviana Radcliffe dead?"

"No; but she is dying," replied Ruth.

"If that is the case, I must go to her directly," observed Dame Ipgreve. "She may have some valuable about her which I must secure."

"You will be disappointed, mother," rejoined Ruth, with a look of irrepressible disgust. "She has nothing valuable left but this golden crucifix, which she has sent to my father, on condition of his allowing Guy Fawkes to see her before she dies."

"Give it me, wench," cried Jasper Ipgreve, "and let her die in peace."

"She will not die in peace unless she sees him," replied Ruth. "Nor shall you have it, if you do not comply with her request."

"How!" exclaimed her father, "do you dare—"

"Think not to terrify me, father," interrupted Ruth. "I am resolute in this. Hear me," she cried, seizing his arm, and fixing a look upon him that seemed to pierce his soul; "hear me," she said, in a tone as low as to be inaudible to her mother, "she shall see him, or I will denounce you as the murderer of Tresham. Now will you comply?"

"Give me the cross," said Ipgreve.

"Not till you have earned it," replied his daughter.

"Well, well," he rejoined; "if it must be, it must. But I may get into trouble in the matter. I must consult Master Forsett, the gentleman gaoler, who has the charge of Guy Fawkes, before I dare take him to her cell."

"Consult whom you please," rejoined Ruth, impatiently; "but lose no time, or you will be too late."

Muttering imprecations on his daughter, Ipgreve left the Well Tower, and Rath hurried back to Viviana, whom she found anxiously expecting her, and related to her what she had done.

"Oh, that I may hold out till he comes!" cried Viviana; "but my strength is failing fast."

Ruth endeavoured to comfort her, but she was unequal to the effort, and, bursting into tears, knelt down, and wept upon the pillow beside her. Half an hour had now elapsed. It seemed an age to the poor sufferers, and still the gaoler came not, and even Ruth had given up all hope, when a heavy tread was heard in the passage. The door was opened, and Guy Fawkes appeared, attended by Ipgreve and Forsett.

"We will not interrupt your parting," said Forsett, who seemed to have a touch of humanity in his composition. And motioning Ruth to follow him, he quitted the cell with Ipgreve.

Guy Fawkes, meanwhile, had approached the couch, and gazed with an expression of intense anguish at Viviana. She returned his glance with a look of the utmost affection, and clasped his hand between her thin fingers.

"I am now standing on the brink of eternity," she said, in a solemn tone, "and I entreat you earnestly, as you hope to ensure our meeting hereafter, to employ the few days left you in sincere and hearty repentance. You have sinned—sinned deeply, but not beyond the power of redemption. Let me feel that I have saved you, and my last moments will be happy. Oh! by the love I have borne you—by the pangs I have endured for you—by the death I am now dying for you—let me implore you not to lose one moment, but to supplicate a merciful Providence to pardon your offence."

"I will—I will," rejoined Fawkes, in broken accents. "You have opened my eyes to my error, and I sincerely repent it."

"Saved! saved!" cried Viviana, raising herself in the bed. Opening her arms, she strained him to her bosom; and for a few moments they mingled their tears together.

"And now," she said, sinking backwards, "kneel by me—pray for forgiveness—pray audibly, and I will join in your prayer."

Guy Fawkes knelt by the bedside, and addressed the most earnest supplications to Heaven for forgiveness. For awhile, he heard Viviana's gentle accents accompany him. They grew fainter and fainter, until at last they totally ceased. Filled with a dreadful apprehension, he sprang to his feet. An angelic smile illumined her countenance,—her gaze was fixed on him for one moment,—it then grew dim and dimmer, until it was extinguished.

Guy Fawkes uttered a cry of the wildest despair, and fell to the ground. Alarmed by the sound, Forsett and Ipgreve, who were standing outside, rushed into the cell, and instantly raised him. But he

was now in a state of distraction, and for the moment seemed endowed with all his former strength. Striving to break from them, he cried, in a tone of the most piercing anguish, "You shall not tear me from her! I will die with her! Let me go, I say, or I will dash out my brains against these flinty walls, and baulk you of your prey."

But his struggles were in vain. They held him fast, and calling for further assistance, conveyed him to his cell, where, fearing he might do some violence to himself, they placed him in irons. Ruth entered the cell as soon as Fawkes and the others had quitted it, and performed the last sad offices for the departed. Alternately praying and weeping, she watched by the body during the whole of the night. On the following day, the remains of the unfortunate Viviana were interred in the chapel of Saint Peter on the Green, and the sole mourner was the gaoler's daughter. "Peace be with her!" cried Ruth, as she turned away from the grave. "Her sorrows at last are over."

CHAPTER XV.—SAINT PAUL'S CHURCHYARD.

GUY FAWKES was for some time wholly inconsolable. His stoical nature seemed completely subdued, and he wept like an infant. By degrees, however, the violence of his grief abated, and calling to mind the last injunctions of her whose loss he mourned, he addressed himself to prayer, and acknowledging his guilt, besought her intercession with Heaven for his forgiveness.

It will not seem strange, when his superstitious character is taken into consideration, that he should fancy he received an immediate proof that his prayers were heard. To his excited imagination, it appeared that a soft unearthly strain of music floated in the air over his head; that an odour like that of Paradise filled his cell; while an invisible finger touched his brow. While in this entranced state, he was utterly insensible to his present miserable situation, and he seemed to have a foretaste of celestial happiness. He did not, however, desist from prayer, but continued his supplications throughout the day.

On that night he was visited by the lieutenant, who announced to him that the execution of four of the conspirators was fixed for Thursday (it was then Tuesday), while his own and that of the three others would not take place till the following day.

"As you are the greatest traitor of all, your execution will be reserved to the last," pursued Waad. No part of the sentence will be omitted. You will be dragged to Old Palace Yard, over against the scene of your intended bloody and damnable action, at a horse's tail, and will be there turned off the gallows, and hanged—but *not till you are dead*. You will then be embowelled; your vile heart, which conceived this atrocious design, will be torn beating from your breast; and your quarters will be placed on the palace gates as an abhorrent spectacle in the eyes of men, and a terrible proof of the king's just vengeance."

Guy Fawkes heard the recapitulation of his dreadful sentence unmoved.

"The sole mercy I would have craved of his majesty would have been *permission to die first*," he said. "But Heaven's will be done! I deserve my doom."

"*What! is your stubborn nature at length subdued?*" cried the lieutenant, *in surprise*. "Do you repent of your offence?"

"Deeply and heartily," returned Fawkes.

"Make the sole amends in your power for it, then, and disclose the names of all who have been connected with the atrocious design?" rejoined Waad.

"I confess myself guilty," replied Fawkes, humbly; "but I accuse no others."

"Then you die impenitent," rejoined the lieutenant, "and cannot hope for mercy hereafter."

Guy Fawkes made no answer, but bowed his head upon his breast, and the lieutenant, darting a malignant look at him, quitted the cell.

On the following day, the whole of the conspirators were taken to Saint John's Chapel, in the White Tower, where a discourse was pronounced to them by Doctor Overall, dean of Saint Paul's, who enlarged upon the enormity of their offence, and exhorted them to repentance. The discourse over, they were about to be removed, when two ladies, clad in mourning habits, entered the chapel. These were Lady Digby and Mrs. Rookwood, and they immediately flew to their husbands. The rest of the conspirators walked away, and averted their gaze from the painful scene. After an ineffectual attempt to speak, Lady Digby swooned away, and was committed by her husband, while in a state of insensibility, to the care of an attendant. Mrs. Rookwood, however, who was a woman of high spirit, and great personal attractions, though the latter were now wasted by affliction, maintained her composure, and encouraging her husband to bear up manfully against his situation, tenderly embraced him and withdrew. The conspirators were then taken back to their cells.

At an early hour on the following morning the four miserable persons intended for death, namely, Sir Everard Digby, the elder Winter, John Grant, and Bates, were conducted to the Beauchamp Tower. Bates would have stood aloof from his superiors; but Sir Everard Digby took him kindly by the hand, and drew him towards them.

"No distinctions must be observed now," he said. "We ought to beg pardon of thee, my poor fellow, for bringing thee into this strait!"

"Think not of me, worshipful sir," replied Bates. "I loved Mr. Catesby so well, that I would have laid down my life for him at any time; and I now die cheerfully in his cause."

"Mr. Lieutenant," said Robert Winter to Sir William Waad, who stood near them with Forsett and Ipgreve, "I pray you commend me to my brother. Tell him I die in entire love of him; and if it is possible for the departed to watch over the living, I will be with him at his last hour."

At this moment, a trampling of horses was heard on the Green, and the lieutenant proceeding to the grated window, saw four mounted troopers, each having a sledge and hurdle attached by ropes to his steed, drawn up before the door. While he was gazing at them, an officer entered the room, and informed him that all was in readiness. Sir William Waad then motioned the prisoners to follow him, and they descended the spiral staircase.

The Green was thronged with horse and foot soldiers, and as the conspirators issued from the arched door of the fortification, the bell of Saint Peter's Chapel began to toll. Sir Everard Digby was first bound to a hurdle, with his face towards the horse, and the others were quickly secured in the same manner. The melancholy cavalcade

was then put in motion. A troop of horse-soldiers, in their full accoutrements, and with calivers upon their shoulders, rode first; then came a band of halberdiers on foot; then the masked executioner, mounted on a led horse; then the four prisoners on the hurdles, one after the other; then the lieutenant on horseback; while another band of horse-soldiers, equipped like the first, brought up the rear. They were met by the Recorder of London, Sir Henry Montague, and the sheriffs, at the gate of the Middle Tower, to the latter of whom the lieutenant, according to custom, delivered up the bodies of the prisoners. After a short delay, the train again set forward, and emerging from the Bulwark Gate, proceeded through an enormous concourse of spectators towards Tower-street.

Aware that a vast crowd would be assembled in the city, and apprehensive of some popular tumult, the lord mayor had issued precepts to the aldermen of every ward, commanding them "to cause one able and sufficient person, with a halberd in his hand, to stand at the door of every dwelling-house in the open street in the way that the traitors were to be drawn towards the place of execution, there to remain from seven in the morning until the return of the sheriffs." But these were not the whole of the arrangements made to preserve order. The cavalcade, it was fixed, was to proceed along Tower-street, Gracechurch-street, Lombard-street, Cheapside, and so on to the west-end of Saint Paul's Cathedral, where the scaffold was erected. Along the whole road, on either side, a line of halberdiers was drawn up, while barriers were erected against the cross streets. Nor were these precautions needless. Such a vast concourse was collected, that nothing but the presence of a strong armed force could have prevented confusion and disorder. The roofs of all the houses, the towers of the churches, the steps of the crosses, were covered with spectators, who groaned and hooted as the conspirators passed by.

The scaffold, as has just been stated, was erected in front of the great western entrance of the cathedral. The mighty valves of the sacred structure were thrown open, and disclosed its columned aisles crowded with spectators, as was its roof and central tower. The great bell, which had begun to toll when the melancholy procession came in sight, continued to pour forth its lugubrious sounds during the whole of the ceremonial. The rolling of muffled drums was likewise heard above the tumultuous murmurs of the impatient multitude. The whole area from the cathedral to Ludgate-hill was filled with spectators, but an open space was kept clear in front of the scaffold, in which the prisoners were one by one unbound from the hurdles.

During this awful pause, they had sufficient time to note the whole of the dreadful preparations. At a little distance from them was a large fire, on which boiled a caldron of pitch, destined to receive their dismembered limbs. A tall gallows, approached by a double ladder, sprung from the scaffold, on which the hangman was already mounted, with the rope in his hand. At the foot of the ladder was the quartering-block, near which stood the masked executioner with a chopper in his hand, and two large sharp knives in his girdle. His arms were bared to the shoulder; and a leathern apron, soiled by gory stains, and tied round his waist, completed his butcherly appearance. Straw was scattered upon the scaffold near the block.

Sir Everard Digby was the first to receive the fatal summons.

mounted with a firm footstep, and his youth, his noble aspect, and undaunted demeanour, awakened, as before, the sympathy of the beholders. Looking round, he thus addressed the assemblage:

"Good people, I am here about to die, ye well know for what cause. Throughout the matter I have acted according to the dictates of my conscience. They have led me to undertake this enterprise, which, in respect of my religion, I hold to be no offence; but in respect of the law, a heinous offence, and I therefore ask forgiveness of God, of the king, and of the whole realm."

Crossing himself devoutly, he then knelt down, and recited his prayers in Latin, after which he arose, and again looking round, said, in an earnest voice—

"I desire the prayers of all good Catholics, and of none other."

"Then none will pray for you," replied several voices from the crowd.

Heedless of the retort, Sir Everard surrendered himself to the executioner's assistant, who divested him of his cloak and doublet, and unfastened his collar. In this state he mounted the ladder, and the hangman fulfilled his office. Robert Winter was next summoned, and ascended the scaffold with great firmness. Everything proclaimed the terrible tragedy that had just been enacted. The straw was sprinkled with blood, so was the block, so were the long knives of the executioner, whose hands and arms were dyed with the same crimson stain; while in one corner of the scaffold stood a basket containing the dismembered limbs of the late unfortunate sufferer. But these dreadful sights produced no effect on Robert Winter. Declining to address the assemblage, he at once surrendered himself to the assistant, and shared the fate of his friend.

Grant was the next to follow. Undismayed as his predecessor, he looked round with a cheerful countenance, and said—

"I am about to suffer the death of a traitor, and am content to die so. But I am satisfied that our project was so far from being sinful, that I rely entirely on my merits in bearing a part in it, as an abundant satisfaction and expiation for all the sins I have at other times of my life committed."

This speech was received by a terrific yell from the multitude. Wholly unmoved, however, Grant uttered a few prayers, and then crossing himself, mounted the ladder, and was quickly despatched. The bloody business was completed by the slaughter of Bates, who died as resolutely as the others. These executions, being conducted with the utmost deliberation, occupied nearly an hour. The crowd then separated to talk over the sight they had witnessed, and to keep holiday during the remainder of the day, rejoicing that an equally-exciting spectacle was in store for them on the morrow.

CHAPTER XVI.—OLD PALACE YARD.

GUY FAWKES's tranquillity of mind did not desert him to the last. On the contrary, as his term of life drew near its close, he became more cheerful and resigned, his sole anxiety being that all should be speedily terminated. When Ipgreve took leave of him for the night, he threw himself on his couch, and soon fell into a gentle slumber. His dreams were soothing, and he fancied that Viviana appeared to him clad in robes of snowy whiteness, and, regarding him with a smiling counte-

nance, promised that the gates of eternal happiness would be opened to him on the morrow.

Awaking about four o'clock, he passed the interval between that time and his summons by the gaoler in earnest prayer. At six o'clock Ipgreve made his appearance. He was accompanied by his daughter, who had prevailed on him to allow her to take leave of the prisoner. She acquainted Fawkes with all particulars of the interment of Viviana, to which he listened with tearful interest.

"Would my remains might be laid beside her!" he said. "But fate forbids it!"

"Truly does it," observed Ipgreve, gruffly, "unless you would have her body removed to the spikes of Whitehall gates."

Disregarding this brutal speech, which called a blush of shame to the cheeks of Ruth, Fawkes affectionately pressed her hand, and said, "Do not forget me in your prayers, and sometimes visit the grave of Viviana."

"Doubt it not," she replied, in accents half suffocated with grief.

Fawkes then bade her farewell, and followed the gaoler through various intricate passages, which brought them to a door opening upon one of the lower chambers of the Beauchamp Tower. Unlocking it, Ipgreve led the way up the circular staircase, and ushered his companion into the large chamber where Rookwood, Keyes, and Thomas Winter were already assembled. The morning was clear, but frosty, and bitterly cold; and when the lieutenant appeared, Rookwood besought him to allow them a fire, as their last earthly indulgence. The request was peremptorily refused. A cup of hot spiced wine was, however, offered them, and accepted by all except Fawkes.

At the same hour as on the previous day, the hurdles were brought to the entrance of the fortification, and the prisoners bound to them. The recorder and sheriffs met them at the Middle Tower, as they had done the other conspirators, and the cavalcade set forth. The crowd was even greater than on the former occasion, and it required the utmost exertion on the part of the guard to maintain order. Some little delay occurred at Ludgate, and during this brief halt Rookwood heard a cry, and looking up, perceived his wife at the upper window of one of the habitations, waving her handkerchief to him, and cheering him by her gestures. He endeavoured to answer her by signs; but his hands were fast bound, and the next moment the cavalcade moved on.

At Temple Bar another halt occurred; and as the train moved slowly forward, an immense crowd like a swollen stream swept after it. The two gates at Whitehall, then barring the road to Westminster, were opened as the train approached, and a certain portion of the concourse allowed to pass through. The scaffold, which had been removed from St. Paul's, was erected in the middle of Old Palace Yard, in front of the House of Lords. Around it were circled a band of halberdiers, outside whom stood a dense throng. The buttresses and pinnacles of the Abbey were covered with spectators; so was the roof of the parliament-house; and the gallery over the entrance. The bell of the Abbey began to toll as the train passed through the gates of Whitehall, and its deep booming filled the air. Just as the conspirators were released from the hurdles, Topcliffe, who had evidently, from his disordered attire, arrived from a long journey, rode up and dismounted.

"I am just in time," he cried, with an exulting glance at the conspirators; "this is not the last execution I shall witness. Faith

Garnet and Oldcorne are prisoners, and on their way to London. I was a long time in unearthing the priestly foxes, but I succeeded at last."

At this moment an officer approached and summoned Thomas Winter to mount the scaffold. He obeyed, and exhibited no symptom of quailing, except that his complexion suddenly turned to a livid colour. Being told of this by the lieutenant, he tried to account for it by saying that he thought he saw his brother precede him up the steps. He made a brief address, protesting he died a true Catholic, and in that faith, notwithstanding his offences, hoped to be saved.

Rookwood followed him, and indulged in a somewhat longer oration. "I confess my offence to God," he said, "in seeking to shed blood, and implore His mercy. I likewise confess my offence to the king, of whose majesty I humbly ask forgiveness; and I further confess my offence to the whole state, of whom in general I entreat pardon. May the Almighty bless the king, the queen, and all their royal progeny, and grant them a long and happy reign! May He turn their hearts to the Catholic faith, so that heresy may be wholly extirpated from the kingdom!"

The first part of this speech was well received by the assemblage, but the latter was drowned in groans and hootings, amid which Rookwood was launched into eternity. Keyes came next, and eyeing the assemblage disdainfully, went up the ladder, and threw himself off with such force that he broke the rope, and was instantly despatched by the executioner and his assistants. Guy Fawkes now alone remained, and he slowly mounted the scaffold. His foot slipped on the blood-stained boards, and he would have fallen, if Topcliffe, who stood near him, had not caught his hand. A deep silence prevailed as he looked around, and uttered the following words in a clear and distinct voice:

"I ask forgiveness of the king and the state for my criminal intention, and trust that my death will wash out my offence."

He then crossed himself and knelt down to pray, after which his cloak and doublet were removed by the executioner's assistant, and placed with those of the other conspirators. He made an effort to mount the ladder, but his stiffened limbs refused their office.

"Your courage fails you," sneered Topcliffe, laying his hand upon his shoulder.

"My strength does," replied Fawkes, sternly regarding him. "Help me up the ladder, and you shall see whether I am afraid to die."

Seeing how matters stood, the executioner who stood by, leaning upon his chopper, tendered him his blood-stained hand. But Fawkes rejected it with disgust, and exerting all his strength, forced himself up the ladder. As the hangman adjusted the rope he observed a singular smile illumine the features of his victim.

"You seem happy," he said.

"I am happy," replied Fawkes, earnestly; "I see the form of her I loved beckoning me to unfading happiness."

With this, he stretched out his arms and sprang from the ladder. *Before his frame was exposed to the executioner's knife, life was totally extinct.*

CHAPTER XVII.—THE LAST EXECUTION.

LITTLE more remains to be told, and that little is of an equally painful nature with the tragical events just related.

Fathers Garnet and Oldcorne, together with Mr. Abingdon and their servants, arrived in London on the 12th of February, about a fortnight after the execution of the other conspirators. They were first taken to the Gatehouse at Westminster, and were examined on the following day by the Earl of Salisbury and the privy council at the Star Chamber. Nothing could be elicited from them, and Garnet answered the earl's interrogatories with infinite subtlety and address. The examination over, they were ordered to be removed to the Tower. Topcliffe accompanied them to the stairs. As they proceeded thither, he called Garnet's attention to a ghastly object stuck on a spike over the palace gates.

"Do you recognise those features?" he asked.

"No," replied Garnet, shudderingly averting his gaze.

"I am surprised to hear it," rejoined Topcliffe, "for they were once well known to you. It is the head of Guy Fawkes. Of all the conspirators," he added, with a bitter laugh, "he was the only one who died truly penitent. It is reported that this happy change was wrought in him by Viviana Radcliffe."

"Heaven have mercy upon his soul!" muttered Garnet.

"I will tell you a strange tale about Catesby," pursued Topcliffe. "He was buried in the garden at Holbeach with Percy; but an order was sent down by the Earl of Salisbury to have their bodies disinterred and quartered. When Catesby's head was severed from the trunk, to be set on the gates of Warwick, fresh blood spouted forth, as if life were in the veins."

"You do not expect me to believe this idle story?" said Garnet, incredulously.

"Believe it or not, as you please," returned Topcliffe, angrily.

On arriving at the fortress, Garnet was lodged in the large chamber of the Beauchamp Tower, and allowed the attendance of his servant, Nicholas Owen, while Oldcorne was equally well accommodated in the Constable Tower. This leniency was the result of the policy of the Earl of Salisbury, who hoped to obtain disclosures from the two Jesuit priests which would enable him to strike the decisive blow he meditated against the Papists. But he was unsuccessful. They refused to make any confessions which would criminate themselves, or implicate others; and as none of the conspirators, not even Tresham, had admitted their connexion with the plot, it was difficult to find proof against them. Garnet underwent daily examinations from the Earl of Salisbury and the commissioners, but he baffled all their inquiries.

"If we cannot wring the truth from you by fair means, Mr. Garnet," said Salisbury, "we must have recourse to torture."

"*Minare ista pueris*," replied Garnet, contemptuously.

"Leave these two priests to me, my lord," observed Sir William Waad, who was present at the examination, which took place at the council chamber in his lodgings; "leave them to me," he said, in a low voice to the earl, "and I will engage to procure a full confession from their own lips, without resorting to torture."

"You will render the state an important service by doing so," replied Salisbury, in the same tone. "I place the matter entirely in your hands."

The lieutenant set to work without loss of time. By his directions, Garnet and Oldcorne were removed from their present places of confinement to two subterranean cells immediately adjoining each other, but between which a secret recess, contrived in the thickness of the wall, and built for the purpose it was subsequently put to, existed. Two days after they had been so immured, Ipgreve, who had received his instructions, loitered for a moment in Oldcorne's cell, and, with affected hesitation, informed him that for a trifling reward he would enable him to hold unreserved communication with his fellow-prisoner.

Oldcorne eagerly caught at the bait, but required to be satisfied that the gaoler could make good his words. Ipgreve immediately proceeded to the side of the cell, and holding a lamp to the wall, showed him a small iron knob.

"Touch this spring," he said, "and a stone will fall from its place, and enable you to converse with Father Garnet, who is in the next cell. But you must take care to replace the stone when any one approaches."

Promising to observe the utmost caution, and totally unsuspecting of the deceit practised upon him, Oldcorne gave Ipgreve the reward, and as soon as he was gone, touched the spring, and found it act precisely as the gaoler had stated. Garnet was greatly surprised to hear the other's voice, and on learning how the communication was managed, was at first suspicious of some stratagem, but by degrees his fears wore off, and he became unreserved in his discourse with his companion, discussing the fate of the conspirators, their own share in the plot, the probability of their acquittal, and the best means of baffling their examiners. All these interlocutions were overheard and taken down by the lieutenant and two other witnesses, Forsett and Lockerson, private secretary to the Earl of Salisbury, who were concealed in the recess. Having obtained all the information he desired, Sir William Waad laid his notes before the council, and their own confessions being read to the priests, they were both greatly confused, though neither would admit their authenticity.

Meanwhile their two servants, Owen and Chambers, had been repeatedly examined, and refusing to confess, were at last suspended from a beam by the thumbs. But this producing no result, they were told that on the following day they would be placed on the rack. Chambers then offered to make a full confession, but Owen continuing obstinate, was conveyed back to his cell. Ipgreve brought him his food as usual in the evening, and on this occasion it consisted of broth, and a small allowance of meat. It was the custom of the gaoler to bring with him a small blunt-pointed knife, with which he allowed the prisoner to cut his victuals. Having got possession of the knife, Owen tasted the broth, and complaining that it was quite cold, he implored the gaoler to get it warmed for him, as he felt extremely unwell. Somewhat moved by his entreaties, and more by his appearance, Ipgreve complied. On his return, he found the unfortunate man lying in one corner of the cell, partially covered by a heap of straw which ordinarily formed his bed.

"Here is your broth," he said. "Take it while it is hot. I shall give myself no further trouble about you."

"It will not be needed," gasped Owen.

Alarmed by the sound of his voice, Ipgreve held the light towards

him, and perceived that his face was pale as death. At the same time, he remarked that the floor was covered with blood. Instantly divining the truth, the gaoler rushed towards the wretched man, and dragging away the blood-stained straw, found he had inflicted a frightful wound upon himself with the knife, which he still held in his grasp.

"Fool that I was, to trust you with the weapon!" cried Ippgrave. "But who would have thought it could inflict a mortal wound?"

"Any weapon will serve him who is resolved to die," rejoined Owen. "You cannot put me on the rack now." And with a ghastly expression of triumph he expired.

Soon after this, Oldcorne and Abingdon were sent down to Worcester, where the former was tried and executed. Stephen Littleton suffered death at the same time. On Friday, the 23rd of March, full proofs being obtained against him, Garnet was arraigned of high treason at Guildhall. The trial, which excited extraordinary interest, was attended by the king, by the most distinguished personages, male and female, of his court, and by all the foreign ambassadors. Garnet conducted himself throughout his arraignment, which lasted for thirteen hours, with the same courage and address which he had displayed on his examinations before the commissioners. But his subtlety availed him little. He was found guilty and condemned.

The execution of the sentence was for some time deferred, it being hoped that a complete admission of his guilt would be obtained from him, together with disclosures relative to the designs of the Jesuit party. With this view, the examinations were still continued, but the rigour with which he had been latterly treated was relaxed. A few days before his execution, he was visited by several eminent Protestant divines—Doctor Montague, dean of the Chapel Royal; Doctor Neile, dean of Westminster; and Doctor Overall, dean of St. Paul's; with whom he had a long disputation on points of faith and other spiritual matters. At the close of this discussion, Doctor Overall remarked,

"I suppose you expect, Mr. Garnet, that, after your death, the Church of Rome will declare you a martyr?"

"I a martyr!" exclaimed Garnet, sorrowfully. "O what a martyr I should be! If, indeed, I were really about to suffer death for the Catholic religion, and had never known of this project, except by means of sacramental confession, I might, perhaps, be accounted worthy the honour of martyrdom, and might deservedly be glorified in the opinion of our church. As it is, I acknowledge myself to have sinned in this respect, and deny not the justice of the sentence passed upon me."

Satisfied, at length, that no further disclosures could be obtained from him, the king signed the warrant for his execution on the 2nd of May. The scaffold was erected at the west end of Saint Paul's Cathedral, on the spot where Digby and the other conspirators had suffered. A vast assemblage was collected as on the former occasion, and similar precautions were taken to prevent tumult and disturbance. The unfortunate man's torture was cruelly and unnecessarily prolonged by a series of questions proposed to him on the scaffold by Doctor Overall and the Dean of Westminster, all of which he answered very collectedly and clearly. He maintained his fortitude to the last. *When fully prepared, he mounted the ladder, and thus addressed the assemblage:*

"I commend myself to all good Catholics. I grieve that I have offended the king by not revealing the design entertained against him, and that I did not use more diligence in preventing the execution of the plot. I commend myself most humbly to the lords of his majesty's council, and entreat them not to judge too hardly by me. I beseech all men that Catholics may not fare the worse for my sake, and I exhort all Catholics to take care not to mix themselves with seditions or traitorous designs against the king's majesty, whom God preserve!"

Making the sign of the cross upon his forehead and breast, he continued:

"In nomine Patris, Filii, et Spiritus sancti! Jesus Maria! Maria, mater gratiæ! mater misericordiæ! Tu me ab hoste protege, et horâ mortis suscipe! In manus tuas Domine, commendo spiritum meum, quia tu redimisti me, Domine, Deus veritatis." Again crossing himself, he added, *"Per crucis hoc signum fugiat procul omne malignum! Infige crucem tuam, Domine, in corde meo!"*

And with this last pathetic ejaculation he threw himself from the ladder.

Garnet obtained, after death, the distinction he had disclaimed while living. He was enrolled, together with Oldcorne, among the list of Catholic martyrs. Several miracles are affirmed by the Jesuits to have been performed in his behalf. Father More relates that on the lawn at Hendlip, where he and Oldcorne last set foot, "a new and hitherto unknown species of grass sprang up into the exact shape of an imperial crown, and remained for a long time without being trodden down by the feet of passengers, or eaten up by the cattle." It was further asserted that a spring of oil burst forth at the west-end of Saint Paul's Cathedral on the precise spot where he suffered. But the most singular prodigy is that recounted by Endæmon Joannes, who affirms that in a straw which had been sprinkled with Garnet's blood, a human countenance, strangely resembling that of the martyr, was discovered. This legend of the Miraculous Straw, having received many embellishments and improvements as it travelled abroad, obtained universal credence, and was conceived to fully establish Garnet's innocence.

Anne Vaux, the Jesuits' devoted friend, retired with her sister, Mrs. Brooksby, to a nunnery in Flanders, where she ended her days.

So terminated the memorable and never-to-be-forgotten Gunpowder Treason, for deliverance from which our church still offers thanksgivings, and in remembrance of which, on the anniversary of its discovery, fagots are collected and bonfires lighted to consume the effigy of the arch-conspirator, GUY FAWKES.

ROCKINGHAM;

OR,

THE YOUNGER BROTHER.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF "ELECTRA."

LONDON:

GEORGE ROUTLEDGE AND CO., FARRINGTON STREET.

1854.

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION.

I WAS sitting, one morning last year, at my breakfast-table attempting to find something interesting in an Autumn paper, and deploring the sad fate which was detaining me in town during the third week in September, when I was startled by a low knock at my door, and my old schoolfellow, Tom Thornton, entered the room.

"My dear friend!" cried I. "Can that be you? I thought you were by this time in Italy!" and then observing that he was in deep mourning, I hastily inquired into the cause of his unexpected return.

He informed me that his uncle, Sir William Thornton, with whom I had been well acquainted, had suddenly died, leaving him the whole of his fortune and property; that this intelligence had reached him at Marseilles; that he had hurried back to England in the hope of being able to perform the last duties to his deceased relative; but that having been delayed on the road, he had only arrived several days after the funeral.

"And now, my dear friend," continued he, "what I want you to do is, to run down with me to Abbeysfield, and assist me to enter upon the discharge of my new duties there. I daresay we shall find as many partridges as last year, and you shall have them all to yourself."

I willingly accepted this offer for a few days, and in due course of time, we reached his new abode.

There, all was still in great confusion; and so many were the calls upon my friend's time, that he deferred, until the first rainy morning, the *minute* examination of his late uncle's papers.

which was strongly recommended to him by his legal adviser, but which he was continually delaying, from an invincible aversion to such a painful occupation.

The dreaded day at last came, as dreary and as desolate as could well be desired. Thornton ordered a large fire to be made in the small library, which had been his uncle's study, and in which the venerable baronet had actually breathed his last. The keys were delivered to my friend, and we entered the room together.

It is a sad and awful moment when we cross the threshold of the chamber of Death for the first time after its last inmate has been consigned to his dark and permanent abode; to see each unconscious relic of his memory still subsisting in the unaltered array of former days, while the possessor himself is for ever withdrawn.

Not a chair had been removed, not a book had been displaced, since the hour when the kind-hearted old man had last welcomed me there to the generous hospitality of his noble mansion. All was in the accustomed order.—He alone was gone.

I saw, as we entered, Thornton's handkerchief pressed to his eyes, and the tear must have stood also in mine, but neither of us spoke. Each drawer was now opened in succession, and we proceeded with our unwelcome labours.

They were nearly accomplished when, on searching in the remote corner of an old-fashioned bureau, Thornton discovered a long manuscript, accompanied by a private letter.

"For Heaven's sake, my dear fellow," said he, "just look over this, and see if it can be of any importance now. Well, what do you think of it?" resumed he, when I had glanced for a few minutes at the papers.

"It appears to me to be a rather singular production," replied I. "Here is a sort of memoir of a young man, written in a lady's hand, and partly in French; and here is a letter, relating to the same person, addressed apparently to your late *uncle* by one of his brothers. Had he any?"

"*He had two*, I believe, neither of whom have I ever seen

One was drowned while at Oxford ; the other, whose name was Charles, was reckoned one of the most distinguished officers in the naval service, and died early in the West Indies, the youngest admiral on the list. I have often heard my uncle mention him."

While Thornton was speaking, I had continued to peruse the papers before me, and I felt a growing interest in the fate of the person whose adventures they related.

Soon afterwards, my companion was preparing to withdraw.

"Will you allow me to stay here," said I, "and read this manuscript through? I know that you never could finish a novel, but you are aware how devoted I am to anything that is romantic or striking in the history of human life, and I have here lit upon something which has really captivated me."

"By all means," answered Thornton, "so that you do not oblige me to read it," and he left me alone.

I gave one look towards the dreary prospect of the shrubbery, still shrouded in mist and rain, and gazed once more at the untenanted and desolate apartment; I heaped fresh coals upon the fire, I drew close to it a deep arm-chair, and was soon completely absorbed in the tale before me.

I was just concluding it, when the door opened, and Thornton entered to warn me that the dinner-bell was ringing. He gazed in my face with a look of the most intense astonishment, and said:—

"My dear fellow, you don't mean to say?—no, really?—over this manuscript?"

"Well, I suppose I have," replied I, smiling, "since you think so. Were it a work of fiction, I believe it would have interested me; but it is genuine, it is true, and as such it has really affected me. Will you make me a present of it, for I should like to keep it?"

Thornton assented, and thus the following papers were still in my possession when I returned to London.

Some literary friends to whom I communicated them, assured me that the pleasure with which I had at first read the memoir of the ill-starred *Lord Edward* was not unnatural; others un-

mercifully derided this opinion, and at length the controversy ran so high, that I was induced, with Thornton's permission, to test the sentiments of the public.

This I have done, without attempting to make a single alteration or correction in the original documents, and merely recommending that precedence should be given to the manuscript over the letter which accompanied it, so that whatever interest the tale may possess, might be suspended according to the more approved rules.

ROCKINGHAM.

CHAPTER I.

*La famille de l'homme n'est que d'un jour ;
Le souffle de Dieu la disperse comme une fumée. — RENÉ.*

I WAS born in the year 1780, at Elmswater Castle, the hereditary abode of my forefathers. One of my parents I never knew. I have at times a vague and faint recollection of a being, whose voice was more gentle, and look more endearing, than those of the hired attendants of my childhood ; one who would bear me in her arms and press me to her bosom with a strange and unusual tenderness. Still, no effort of memory can now recall distinctly to my mind the features and the form of my mother. She died when I was not yet four years old.

My father, Edward Plantagenet Rockingham, Earl and Marquis of Arlingford, was, during my younger years, entirely absorbed in the cares and struggles of political life. I seldom saw him, and when we met, I approached him with the sentiment of reverence, amounting almost to awe, which his commanding appearance and imperious disposition inspired in all around him.

A still haughtier member of the family was his only surviving sister, the Dowager Countess of Sheerness. Her husband having died early in life, without children, all her pride was now centred on her own family, whose affairs indeed, she principally conducted. For her, I never experienced any affection, nor did she ever testify much interest for me, all her feelings being concentrated upon my elder and only brother.

With him also, in my earlier days, I had but little communication. Being six years older than myself, he was at a private school when I was still in the nursery, and was already at Eton when I first left home.

It was thus that, during the days of my early boyhood, I was a stranger to any very deep attachment for those around me. My two greatest allies and friends were Julie, a French maid of my mother's, who, after the death of her mistress, had been retained at Elmswater Castle ; and a lodge-keeper, named Richards, an old sailor, and long a faithful attendant upon one of my great uncles, always surnamed the Admiral.

From Julie, I learned to converse and to read very fluently in

French, before I could write in English. She also taught me a number of the songs of her native land, and those I have never forgotten. How often, in later years, and in distant climes, as I have hummed those air to myself, I have seen again in fancy the woods and the gardens of Elmswater, and recalled to my mind the happy days which I had spent there, when care and sorrow were yet unknown!

With Richards I used to roam during my holiday hours; he was a great sportsman, and from him I learned many an important secret as to the habits and pursuits of every species of game. He also constructed for me a fairy frigate, in which, as I accompanied him upon the lakes of Elmswater, he taught me the first rude principles of seamanship. When gliding on those tranquil waters, I listened with rapture to many a tale of the distant seas and regions that he had visited, and it was doubtless in those hours that I first conceived the notion of one day emulating the naval exploits of my great uncle.

When I was about five years old, my father unexpectedly returned to Elmswater, from which he had been a long time absent, and his sister accompanied him. His object, I understood, was to make some arrangements and to reduce considerably his establishment, previously to his going abroad upon an important mission which he had received from the Government.

Some difficulty arose as to what was to be my destination. I was too old for the nursery—too young to join my brother at school; I could not accompany my father, and my aunt showed no inclination to take charge of me. It was therefore finally decided that I should be left to the care of the rector of the parish, the Reverend Mr. Williams, who lived within half a mile of the castle, and who was a devoted friend of the family. He was a man of mild temper and great learning, and was then already rather advanced in years; his wife, who was scarcely younger than himself, was of a good-natured and homely disposition.

I passed three whole years under their roof; my life was happy, but would have been rather monotonous, had it not been for that thirst after knowledge which, about this time, was first excited within me, and which rendered me as diligent a pupil as my erudite master could well desire. My progress was, by continual application, very rapid; still I forgot neither Julie nor Richards, and the weather was seldom so unfavourable as to prevent my running over to Elmswater from the rectory, to see these two faithful friends, and join in some of the sports which the castle or the domain afforded.

I was about ten years old when my father returned from his mission. He welcomed me very kindly, upon his arrival at Elmswater—questioned me with great interest, as to my studies, and appeared much pleased and surprised at the progress I had made. Lady Sheerness soon came to join him, and I found that though much less diffident than when I had last met her, yet I *could not quite overcome the secret feeling of aversion with which she had always inspired me.*

"How like his mother he is!" said my father to his sister, as I entered the room soon after her arrival.

"The very image," answered she, in rather a disparaging tone; "he would make a pretty looking girl enough. But wait till you see Elmswater; he's the real Rockingham, like you."

When my brother, who had been sent for from Eton, arrived, his appearance certainly fully justified the praises which Lady Sheerness was wont to bestow upon him. His dark eyes, black locks, and haughty bearing, recalled many a picture of the long line of ancestry preserved in the gallery of the castle; and his countenance bore a strong resemblance to that of my father, though, already at this early age, the expression was sterner.

Till then, as I have before said, my brother and I had scarcely met. Whilst most anxious to testify to him, in every way, my affection and even my deference, I soon saw that little sympathy could exist between us: his manner to me, as well as to every one else, was cold and forbidding, and his imperious disposition soon led us into many petty conflicts, which neither of us perhaps did his utmost to avoid. Few of these were worthy of notice or recollection, but one having exercised a great influence over my future destinies, has always dwelt most vividly in my memory.

I had naturally, during the absence of my family, been considered and treated at Elmswater as lord and master, more particularly in the stable-yard, which was my favourite place of resort. In one stall was my pony, in another my Newfoundland dog, in a third my fishing-tackle, and so forth. My brother, on his return, expressed some surprise at the disorderly appearance which the stables thus bore, and, in a summary way, ordered a general clearance. To this I had no reasonable objection to make, though I could not but think that a word of explanation might have been said to me.

My pony showed no dissatisfaction at the change, but it was not so with my favourite dog, who was continually hovering about his former residence, much, as my brother said, to the annoyance of a very fine horse, which Lady Sheerness had just given him.

"Now do kick that cursed dog out of the stables," cried Elmswater one day to his groom.

"There is no use hurting him," said I, who happened to be close by; "here, Nep."

"It is all very well, when you are there," exclaimed my brother; "but when your back is turned, he will be in here again. I shall kick him out myself next time."

"You had better not do that," replied I, more in jest than in earnest; "for he will certainly fly at you—won't you, Nep?"

Nep wagged his tail, and soon afterwards began springing about in such a manner as really to startle my brother's horse. Elmswater was as good as his word, and gave a violent kick at the dog, who immediately sprang upon him.

"Here, Nep, Nep," cried I, really alarmed: but my brother, who *had been bitten*, was in a state of the greatest excitement

affirming that it was I who had set the dog up to fly at him. A fierce altercation ensued, during which Elmswater threatened to strike me. Being no match for him, I seized a stone in self-defence, which I had at first no intention of using; but a heavy blow in my face, the first I had ever received, drove me frantic, and the fatal missile flew from my hand.

The whole had occurred so suddenly, that when I saw the blood flowing from my brother's forehead, I could scarcely believe that I had inflicted the wound. I rushed to him, entreated his forgiveness, and assisted, to the best of my ability, in binding up the cut, which, as we soon ascertained, was very slight; before, however, we could reach the house, a report had already been widely spread that the young earl had been nearly murdered by his brother.

We were ordered to the library, where my father was sitting with Lady Sheerness, and there we were questioned as to the occurrence. My brother told the story, not as I conceived in a very fair manner; still I was too much grieved at the incident to offer any observation.

"Well, come shake hands," said my father, "and for God's sake let us hear no more of anything of the kind."

But this was not Lady Sheerness's view of the case.

"I am quite surprised, Arlingford," said she, "at the admirable forbearance shown by Elmswater, after this cowardly attack——"

"Come, come," replied my father, "you must remember that Edward is barely ten years old, and though of course he is quite wrong in taking up a stone, still the great disparity in age and strength somewhat justifies him, and he won't do it again."

"He certainly should not do it again here if he were my son; I should send him to school to-morrow. The fact is, as I was saying two days ago, it is quite ridiculous that he should be at home at his age."

"Well, my dear, perhaps it is," answered my father; "we can see about his going to Eton when Elmswater returns there."

"Eton, nonsense! it is no place for younger brothers. As it is, he has been lording it away here for so long, that I daresay he fancies himself to be the future master. I'll inquire about that school where Lady Elizabeth Titchford sent her younger sons, who turned out very well indeed. One of them died in India."

"I suppose it is a respectable place?"

"Of course it is; but one where the boys are properly looked after, and brought up according to their future station in life."

Thus my fate was sealed. Within a week Lady Sheerness had received from her friend all the particulars as to the school at Ashton. My father insisted upon my remaining a fortnight more, but at last the fatal day arrived.

The tears stood in Lord Arlingford's eyes as he bid me farewell, urging me, in a few very impressive words, never to forget what I owed to my name and to my rank. He gave me a purse containing twenty guineas, which sum was to be my yearly allowance. My aunt, who appeared a little softened at the parting hour, added another sum of ten guineas. My brother also shook

hands with me, but we had hardly spoken since our last dispute, and I clearly saw that he had not forgiven me.

Julie was in high hysterics at the loss of her own child, as she always called me; and poor Richards' countenance was the very picture of sadness. Still, as the coach could not wait more than two minutes at the gate of Elmswater Park, I was hurried inside, with little more ceremony than my portmanteau, and before the first burst of grief at my departure from home was over, we were further from the castle than I had ever strayed in my longest walks.

I felt a strange mysterious awe at being thus cast upon the world, and a singular dread of the new life upon which I was about to enter. One sentiment, however, prevailed over all others, in that first hour of deep and uncomforted misery—a regret, amounting almost to remorse, at the ungovernable fit of passion which had entirely overcome me in my quarrel with my brother.

My disposition had ever been reckoned mild and conciliatory, and it was not until then that I had known the wild fiend which a deep sense of injury or insult could arouse within me. How I have struggled since to overpower him; and when through years of constant watchfulness I have thought him finally mastered, how fiercely he has again seized upon me, destroying in one moment the promise of many an hour of anxious toil and unrequited forbearance, and irresistibly impelling me to rush upon my fate.

CHAPTER II.

A time to weep, and a time to laugh :
A time to mourn, and a time to dance.—Eccs.

AFTER a long and weary night, the mail reached Plymouth. I there met an old servant of my father, who had been appointed to conduct me from thence to Ashton, a distance of about fifteen miles. As it was Sunday, he took me first to the afternoon service, so that we did not arrive at the school until nearly eight o'clock in the evening.

I had fallen asleep in the chaise, but was fully aroused when I was told we had reached our destination. A servant in a plain livery opened the door, and having ascertained from my companion that I was the new boy, ushered us both into a large sitting-room, where a lady was reading alone by the fireside.

When I was announced, she arose, and taking me by the hand, inquired affectionately how I was? She then, after a few words of civility, dismissed my attendant.

As soon as I had recovered sufficient courage to look more attentively at the person who thus kindly received me, I saw, as I then thought, the loveliest face I had ever as yet gazed upon.

Mrs. Wentworth was then about twenty-two. Her bright eyes, long dark ringlets, fair complexion, and graceful figure formed a very striking contrast to the coarse and masculine appearance of the young countrywomen I had seen about Elmswater; and there was something so winning in her look and smile, that, though naturally shy with a stranger, yet I was soon perfectly at my ease with her."

"Your name is Edward, I think?" said she.

"Yes, ma'am, Lord Edward Cavendish Rockingham," answered I, repeating my designation as I had been taught it by the servants at Elmswater.

"Oh! Edward will do here," said Mrs. Wentworth, smiling. "The doctor is dining out, and will not be home until rather late. You had better go to bed soon, as you must be tired after so long a journey, and it will be time for you to join the school to-morrow morning."

"I have received a letter from your aunt," resumed she, after a moment's silence. She tells me that you are a sad pickle, and that you nearly killed your elder brother. I should not have thought so, from your appearance. You are more like a girl than a boy:—I should almost be tempted to dress you up, and take you to church as my little daughter."

This last compliment would not have flattered me much, but there was a tone of endearment in Mrs. Wentworth's voice which would have led me to forgive a still more injurious imputation. I was proceeding to explain to her the real circumstances of my quarrel at Elmswater, when our conversation was interrupted by a low knocking at the door, after which a boy, or young man, aged about sixteen, entered the room.

"The doctor is dining out," said Mrs. Wentworth, answering the look of the new-comer. "You may keep the report, and the monitor will give it to him to-morrow morning. Let me see, how many are there on the list?"

"Six, ma'am."

"Six—why I sent up five names this afternoon."

"Yes, ma'am, there are five sent up by you, and one by the under-master."

Mrs. Wentworth glanced over the list, then returned it to the boy, who made a respectful bow and withdrew.

During this short period, the purport of which I very imperfectly seized, I was much struck by the change that came over Mrs. Wentworth's manner, and by the cold and almost severe look which had suddenly replaced the playful expression of her countenance while conversing with me. This, however, immediately returned, when I asked her who the stranger was who had just retired.

"He is one of the monitors."

"Monitors, what are they?"

"The four first boys of the school are so named, and the eldest of these is called the captain. They assist in looking after the younger boys, and you must respect them almost as much as you

do the masters themselves. There is one, by the bye, amongst them, whose society you had better avoid."

"What is his name?"

"His name is Thornton. From him you will get neither good advice nor good example."

Some tea having been brought, my spirits were much revived. I continued in conversation with my fascinating companion for more than an hour, and I learned from her many interesting particulars respecting the school over which her husband presided.

It had originally been a foundation, established by two brothers, who, one in the army and the other in the navy, had acquired a large fortune during the Indian wars. The object was to enable the sons of the junior officers of both services to receive education at a very moderate price. The number was at first limited to twenty, which was subsequently doubled in consequence of the endowment having been much increased by further subscriptions.

The school being remarkably well conducted, several wealthy families had obtained leave to send their children there, although these were not in the conditions stipulated by the original rules. No distinction was recognised between one class of boys and the other, yet the pupils amongst themselves assumed and affected a great superiority over their less fortunate companions.

The number was now complete, it having been lately decided that the proportion of pupils was in no case to exceed that of the foundation, thus constituting a total amount of eighty boys, which was exactly made up by my arrival.

The school was divided into six forms, and the studies directed by four masters. The head master had charge of the sixth form; the second master of the fifth and fourth; the French master of the third form, and the writing-master of the first and second.

Soon after nine, Mrs. Wentworth rose, and conducted me to a small room, where I was to sleep for that night. She then kissed me, desired me to get up and dress next morning as soon as I was called, and retired. Though I was much fatigued with my journey, it was long before I fell asleep. Even then the image of the lovely schoolmistress still appeared to watch over me. I still saw in my dreams the smiling look with which she had welcomed me, and I still wondered at the ominous expression which had for a moment overclouded her countenance when the monitor had shown her the mysterious paper.

At half-past six next morning I was awoke by a bluff housemaid, who, breaking into my little room, told me to get up and dress immediately, as she would return in ten minutes and show me the schoolroom, to the door of which I was led by her at the appointed time. When I entered the long room or gallery, where the boys were already at their desks, I was strangely bewildered, and the feeling, that amongst so many there assembled I had not one friend, or even one acquaintance, weighed sadly upon me.

The schoolroom of Ashton was of an oblong shape as I have already said, *about seventy feet in length by thirty feet wide. At one extremity was the door at which I entered; opposite* ❧

another door leading to the playground ; in the centre on one side was the large fireplace, and opposite to this an enclosed platform raised by about three steps from the floor, the use of which I did not then discern.

On either side of this platform and of the chimney stood the desks of the masters, and from thence, extending to the two extremities of the room, the long fixed benches or forms, from which the classes took their names.

Three masters were then at their posts : but the seat on the right of the fireplace, which was raised two steps higher from the floor than the others, and which I guessed to be that of the head master, was as yet vacant. By this desk two boys were then standing. The tallest of these, upon seeing my perplexity, which was in no ways diminished by the staring looks of nearly the whole of the young gentlemen present, made me a sign to approach, and desired me to wait by him, as the head master would be soon coming.

The person who thus addressed me seemed to be nearly seventeen ; he was tall, strong-built, and would have been considered rather plain, had it not been for the expression of good-humour which was habitual in his countenance : from his age and height, I guessed him to be the captain of the school. His companion seemed to be nearly three years younger, and nothing could be more prepossessing than his appearance. As he stood leaning against the high desk, his chiselled features, flowing light brown hair, and graceful figure, would alone have arrested my attention : but what struck me most, was the singular expression of thoughtfulness which his countenance revealed. When I approached, he cast upon me one glance of intense scrutiny ; but the pensive deep blue eye was immediately withdrawn, and remained fixed again upon the high window opposite, as if the unfettered spirit were wandering far into the bright regions without.

"Have you a long list?" said the captain to him, after a few minutes' silence.

"A regular Monday's list—six," answered the younger boy whom I guessed to be the monitor for the day, as he held in his hand the paper which, on the evening before, I had seen presented to Mrs. Wentworth.

"And all of them sent up by her?" inquired the captain.

"No, only five," replied the monitor, with a smile.

"Well, that's pretty fair. Do you know I believe she will drive the lower school to a rebellion before long : in my days, I do not think that we should have stood so much."

The monitor slightly raised his eyebrows, with an expression of deep meaning, but remained silent.

I had listened eagerly to these observations, much wondering whether the female personage thus alluded to could be the charming lady who had welcomed me so kindly the evening before ; but my reflections were cut short by the entrance of the head master. Dr. Wentworth was then not yet fifty ; his manner was calm and dignified, and his features were still handsome, though bearing the

stamp of a life devoted to unremitting application and study. As he entered, everybody rose; when he reached his desk, the captain, having said a few words to him in a low voice, returned to his place, and the monitor was commanded to read prayers, which lasted some minutes. When these were over, Dr. Wentworth began opening and perusing very attentively several letters which lay upon his desk, but seeing the monitor still there, he asked him if there was a report that morning. The monitor handed to him the paper. The head master, having merely inquired whether all was right, desired him to fetch the rod from a neighbouring cupboard, and to call the boys up. With a slow step and mournful countenance, six young gentlemen, answering to their names, approached.

"Now then, Edwards," said the monitor to the tallest of these, "look sharp, don't be all day."

The boy he thus addressed, began slowly to remove all obstacles to the contemplated punishment, and then kneeling upon the second of the three steps of the platform upon which the head master's desk was raised, resigned his hands to the monitor.

"Ready, sir," said the latter; "third form."

The head master seized the rod, and scarcely lifting his eyes from a long letter he was intently reading, inflicted upon the culprit six severe strokes. The same ceremony was gone through with the four following boys, who, belonging to the under school, received only four strokes each.

Nurtured as I had been in my father's house with the utmost care and respect, I remained breathless with surprise and indignation at the sight I thus witnessed. I was amazed at the silent obedience with which the boys submitted to this severe and degrading punishment; but I was scarcely less astonished at the air of almost complete abstraction with which it was applied by the head master, and at the calm indifference with which it was beheld by the monitor.

One boy still remained standing alone at the foot of the platform; he was much younger than any of his companions in misfortune, and his face was pale with terror. When called upon to approach the fatal step, he cast an imploring look towards the monitor, and, in a tearful voice, muttered that it was his first fault. The eyes of the monitor and the head master met, and a smile of intelligence having passed between them, Dr. Wentworth asked who had sent up that boy?

"Mrs. Wentworth," said the monitor.

"Just go to her, and ask her if she will allow the punishment to be remitted this time?"

"I am afraid, sir, she won't for my asking," said the monitor.

"Well, ask in my name."

The monitor retired. At the end of a few minutes he returned, and shaking his head, with a smile, as he approached the desk, said:

"It appears, sir, that he is an old offender, and has already been forgiven more than once."

"Then there is no help for it," said the doctor, again seizing the

fatal implement. The terrified delinquent burst into tears; but the monitor having reminded him that the punishment would be doubled if it were necessary to require the captain's assistance, he at length most reluctantly proceeded with the indispensable preparations. At the first stroke he uttered a piteous shriek, which was repeated at each blow, until the monitor having released his hold, the victim rolled from the steps upon the floor.

I was more appalled at this sight than at all I had witnessed before: but the head master and the monitor were too much accustomed to scenes of this description to bestow any attention upon them. The culprit was allowed a minute or two to recover his self-possession, and then was desired by Dr. Wentworth to get up and return to his seat. The rod had been restored to its place, and the order had been given to call up the fifth form, when, for the first time, the head master's eyes rested on me. He summoned me to him, shook hands with me, and then told the monitor to conduct me to the second master, and request him to examine me. As we were retiring, together:—

"Thornton," said the doctor, "those Greek verses of yours are remarkably good."

My companion answered by a respectful bow.

So this is Thornton, thought I to myself; how singular that Mrs. Wentworth should have expressed so unfavourable an opinion upon him. Surely he cannot deserve such censure.

The second master, to whom I was introduced by my companion, was a young man of delicate appearance, whose countenance and manner struck me as forbidding in the extreme. He put to me, respecting my former studies several questions, more technical than those I had been accustomed to answer at the Rectory; and having expressed his surprise that, at my age, I was not more conversant with the Latin Grammar, recommended that I should be placed in the third form, whither, with the consent of the head master, I was conducted. This class, as I had learned from Mrs. Wentworth, was directed by the French master, a good-humoured, kind-hearted man, who gave me a seat not far from himself, and explained to me the duties I was to perform.

At one o'clock, we were summoned to dinner, after which, as the day was fine, the school adjourned to the playground, a large enclosed field upon which the schoolroom opened. There, a feeling of deep estrangement again came over me: how was I to claim acquaintance with the many strangers around me? how was I to mingle in their sports, or join in their pursuits?

After wandering for some minutes in solitary silence, I observed the monitor whose countenance and bearing had attracted me in the morning, conversing apart with a boy of about his own age. I slowly and respectfully approached them, but the haughty glance of the latter, and the slight smile which I could perceive on the open countenance of Thornton himself, warned me that I was committing *some sort* of extraordinary indiscretion. I therefore determined to draw near a group of younger boys, who were playing at marbles.

When all of them had stared at me to their hearts' content, one of them asked me what my name was.

"Edward," answered I, remembering Mrs. Wentworth's observation to me the night before.

"Edward what?" said the boy rudely.

"My names are, Lord Edward Cavendish Rockingham, if you wish to know them all," answered I, rather sharply.

"O dear me! is that all? I hope your lordship is not fatigued with your journey? Perhaps your lordship will not object to our playing at marbles?" continued my interrogator, encouraged by the loud laughter of his companions.

I felt my spirit rising within me; but the provocation was yet so indirect that I was perplexed how to resent the evidently offensive manner of the boy who addressed me. Very soon afterwards, however, he jostled me, in the course of the game, and having ironically expressed a hope that he had not hurt me, I advised him, in the calmest tone I could command, not to do it again.

"What's to happen to me if I do?"

"It will be time to say, when it occurs," said I, answering his look of defiance. He pushed me again with all his strength. My blood boiled within me, and I struck him in the face.

A ring was immediately formed, and a regular fight commenced between us. My adversary was older and stronger than me, and at first he had nearly overpowered me; but I was desperate, and my strength was doubled by my fury. Suddenly, the encouraging shouts of our companions ceased, and we were informed, in a voice of warning, that the monitor was approaching.

"How did this begin?" said Thornton, who had burst into the ring.

"It was he struck me first," exclaimed my adversary, which statement was corroborated by all around.

"I did," said I, "but not until you had insulted me, and pushed me twice."

"I have no doubt," rejoined Thornton, smiling, "that the provocation did not come from you: come, fight two rounds more, then shake hands, and let us hear no more about it."

The support conveyed in the look and manner of the monitor, redoubled my energy. I now struck full in the face of my antagonist, who showed no dissatisfaction when the appointed time came for suspending hostilities. I then held out my hand, which he rather unwillingly seized.

"Very well fought, indeed," said Thornton, patting me upon the head; "if any boy about your size attempts again to annoy you, serve him in the same manner. If a bigger fellow attacks you, let me know."

I was retiring, but a sudden thought having struck him,—
"Perhaps you had better come with me," said he, and I followed him to a distant part of the ground. On our way, we passed a fair-haired boy of about my own age, standing alone at the foot of a tree.

"Here, Mordaunt," said Thornton to him, "you who never play at any game, take charge of this new boy, and keep him out of harm's way, until he is better acquainted with the rules and habits of this place."

I found my new companion obliging, but very taciturn. His answers to my questions were precise, but singularly laconic, and I had gleaned but little information from him, when we were again summoned to the schoolroom.

Two hours afterwards we returned to the playground. Wishing to avoid any new conflict, I sought Mordaunt: he was again standing alone. As I joined him, we were accosted from the other side of a low wall, which separated the ground from the road, by a man with a basket of oranges.

"Are we allowed to buy these?" said I.

"To be sure."

"Then why don't you buy some?" rejoined I.

"Because I have no money."

I immediately purchased six, offering three to him; but I had recourse to some entreaty before I could prevail upon him to accept more than one. The better acquaintance which this little incident promoted between us, led my new companion to be rather more communicative. As I was most anxious to be conversant with all the forms and habits of the school, I pressed my questions very assiduously, and was much impressed with the shrewd and unprejudiced opinions which were revealed in the short answers I received.

From Mordaunt, I learned that the head master, although rather severe and eccentric, was respected and not disliked by the boys; that the second master was hated; that the French master was a great favourite, though sometimes laughed at for his foreign accent; and that the writing-master was not much looked up to.

The captain was liked on account of his good-nature, and Thornton, who was reckoned the cleverest boy of the school, was generally beloved. The foundation was distinguished by a white cravat and a blue suit, which Mordaunt himself wore; their education cost ten pounds a year only, while the charge for the pupils was eighty. Thence, as well as from the higher station of their families, arose the assumption of superiority maintained by the latter, which being but very partially recognised by their schoolfellows, led to an almost permanent feud between them.

Mordaunt also made me acquainted with the premises of my new abode. The head-master's was a large and comfortable mansion, behind which was a long private flower-garden, kept up with great care by Mrs. Wentworth.

This garden ran parallel with our playground, of which it had, until very lately, formed a part, and from which it was now separated by two high walls. Between these was a narrow road, communicating from the house with the stables, which lay at the *extremity* of the flower-garden. Close by Dr. Wentworth's house, and connected with it by a covered passage, stood the school itself, a long rectangular building, the ground-floor of which comprised

the dining-room and the schoolroom, while the bedrooms of the boys and under-masters, occupied the upper story.

Behind the school and adjoining, as I have said, the private garden, ran the playground, separated, on the two extreme sides by a wall, from a carriage-road, which enclosed it at right angles. At the lower extremity this wall was very high, and was used by the boys for rackets and for ball; but on the side parallel with the garden it ran very low, enabling us to communicate with that part of the road where I had just before purchased the oranges.

I had as yet addressed no questions to my new companion upon the subject which interested me most; but Mrs. Wentworth's name having been alluded to by him, in connection with the flower-garden, I endeavoured to elicit from him as much information as I could respecting her.

I ascertained that she was the daughter of a poor clergyman, with whom Dr. Wentworth had been long acquainted, and that she had been married about two years. At first, she had appeared in delicate health, in low spirits, and had shown no interest whatever in the concerns of the school, or even of the household at Ashton. Latterly, however, and in consequence, as it was said, of some severe remonstrances from her husband, she had taken a more active part, and had now, directly or indirectly, a very considerable share in the management of the school.

Amongst the boys she was generally disliked, and with the exception of a few favourites, whom she treated with the greatest care and indulgence, she evinced little sympathy for them. The origin of this mutual estrangement was difficult to trace, and it would appear that many faults had been committed on both sides.

The first conflict had arisen in consequence of the flower-garden, which had been withdrawn from the original playground. The boys complained that the reduced space left to them was insufficient for many of their sports. This remonstrance having been treated as impertinent, they had raised every possible obstacle to the establishment of the garden, and many trespasses occurred, for which the delinquents were punished, slightly at first, then more severely. Hence new causes of irritation sprung up on both sides.

Another grievance was a greater degree of regularity and economy introduced into the establishment when the direction was assumed by Mrs. Wentworth, at the request of her husband, and the impression which arose, that the proceeds from these reductions were applied to the flower-garden, a new pony-carriage, and other personal expenses of the lady of the house. The feud ran higher still, when a favourite dog of Mrs. Wentworth's, which had incautiously strayed into the playground, received a blow from a stone, from which it never recovered. As yet, however, the contending parties were so seldom placed in connection, that the mutual and growing animosity was principally confined to reciprocal criticism, and hostile insinuations. But a few months before my arrival, two incidents occurred which brought them into more frequent contact.

The first of these occurrences was an observation made in the

town, and reported to the doctor, upon the slovenly appearance of the dress of many of the boys at church on Sundays. The doctor, who hated intensely all household details, insisted upon Mrs. Wentworth's assuming under her especial care everything connected with the boys' toilet, to which she did not consent without much reluctance. Her efforts were, at first, so unsuccessful, and her remonstrances so little heeded, that she was soon induced to bring to justice some of the more hardened offenders, which was much resented by the school at large.

The other circumstance, which had placed a portion of the boys more directly under her control, was a visit from the bishop of the diocese, which had taken place about four months before I had arrived. The worthy prelate, having addressed some questions to the boys upon theological matters, was perfectly astounded at the ignorance displayed by them. Having known Mrs. Wentworth's father, and the very superior education she had received, he strongly recommended her to open herself a class of catechism and divinity for the younger boys.

This observation, Mrs. Wentworth treated as having been made more in jest than in earnest, but such was not the doctor's opinion. He was himself so occupied, that he had no time for any additional tuition; the second master was also absorbed by the care of the two forms committed to him; the French master, though a Protestant, was not very conversant with the peculiar doctrines and rubrick of the Church of England, and the writing-master was scarcely more to be trusted. Besides this, the rules of the school allowed each of the under-masters, alternately, one Sunday to himself.

For these reasons, Dr. Wentworth insisted, and finally obtained, that every Sunday afternoon, his wife should hold, for the younger school, the class prescribed by the bishop. The indignation of the boys at being thus subjected, even for so short a time, and under such peculiar circumstances, to female rule, was most intense.

For the first two or three Sundays, Mrs. Wentworth's class was one continued scene of derisive laughter and turbulence, and when one day she actually burst into tears with vexation and disappointment, hopes were unreservedly expressed that she would be obliged to abandon her undertaking. But she was of a firm and unyielding disposition, and though she had most unwillingly entered upon the duty, she was not to be deterred from the performance of it by these rebellious demonstrations.

A monitor was deputed to assist her in maintaining order, and she was desired by her husband to report to him the name of every delinquent. Each of these was severely punished by him, and Mrs. Wentworth having determined that the mutinous expressions, which this mode of proceeding had at first called forth, should be visited on the original culprit, discipline was soon perfectly established in her class. Then began, as the boys conceived, a system of retaliation on her part, and her authority, once vindicated, was in its turn displayed with redoubled severity. Hence the dislike

of the school for her had grown into absolute hatred on the part of many, particularly amongst the pupils, whose pretensions of superiority over their schoolfellows, she sought on every occasion to put down.

It is not to be supposed that I obtained so much information from Mordaunt without many inquiries, and a conversation far longer on my part than on his. I succeeded, however, in eliciting from him besides, that the under-master and writing-master were supposed to be particularly devoted to Mrs. Wentworth, while she disliked the French master, the captain, and Thornton, who had occasionally expressed some disapprobation at the measures she ordered or countenanced.

As to Mordaunt himself, he told me he had no particular feeling for or against her, or any one in the school; he endeavoured to do his duty regularly, to keep clear of all party conflict, and, being no one's favourite, to be no one's enemy.

CHAPTER III.

If she be false, why then Heaven mocks itself;
I'll not believe it."—OTHELLO.

THE dining-hall at Ashton was a large square room, in which stood four long tables, at which we sat in equal numbers, chairs for one master and one monitor being placed at the extremity of each. The head master, who breakfasted and dined in his own apartments, was generally satisfied with making a short appearance during our repast, and his seat, therefore, remained empty, except when momentarily occupied by Mrs. Wentworth, whose daily attendance at our dinner he particularly exacted. This was the only occasion on which she and the boys met, saving on Sundays.

On the second day after my arrival at Ashton, I observed Mrs. Wentworth's eyes fixed upon me several times while we were at dinner. When the boys rose she called me to her, and looked more attentively at my face, which now bore many marks of my conflict of the preceding day.

"Why, how on earth, you foolish child," she said, "have you already managed to disfigure yourself in this way; where did you get those dreadful bruises?"

"Please, ma'am," faltered I, "I fell down."

"You must not tell stories here," said Mrs. Wentworth, raising her forefinger, but scarcely repressing a smile; "you know very well you did not fall. Look here, Dr. Wentworth, is it not a shame that before this poor boy has been here two days, he should be in such a state? Come tell me who it was you fought with?"

"Please, ma'am, I don't know."

"Now!" said Mrs. Wentworth, again raising her forefinger.

"Indeed, ma'am, I don't know his name."

"Well, but I must and will; surely you could tell him by his appearance."

"So could you, I think, ma'am, if you were to examine his face as you have mine."

Neither the doctor nor Mrs. Wentworth could forbear smiling at the feeling of pride with which I thus indirectly alluded to my prowess of the day before; but we looked around in vain: many boys had already withdrawn, and none, I believe, had shown more alacrity to depart than my antagonist.

"Well, but I must know," continued Mrs. Wentworth. "Who was the monitor yesterday?"

Uncertain whether I ought or ought not to answer this question, I cast a glance in the direction of Thornton, who was standing close by, but he immediately stepped forward, and declared that it was he.

"Oh! I might have guessed that," said Mrs. Wentworth; "it is quite needless to inquire who is the monitor when anything goes wrong here. I must say that I do think it very reprehensible that the boys should be permitted to tear each other to pieces in this manner, while the monitor is reading, or pretending to read, instead of attending to his duties."

"I was not reading yesterday, madam, I assure you," replied Thornton, calmly. "I saw the fight, which was a very fair one, and was happy to find that Rockingham showed a courage which will now secure him, I trust, from any new aggression."

"And may I ask, why you were looking on, and encouraging the fight, as it would appear. Surely it would not have required very much spirit to have separated them."

"Certainly not," answered Thornton, in the same respectful tone, "but we often think that it is better to let the younger boys fight it out, once for all, than that they should be continually quarrelling and striking at each other."

"Is this as you wish, sir?" said Mrs. Wentworth to her husband, insidiously.

"Well, my dear," answered the doctor, who was not easily led into passing any censure upon his favourite pupil, "these are matters we leave to the monitors to decide. I believe that there is truth in what Thornton says, and besides, it is quite impossible to prevent this sort of thing altogether, amongst so many boys."

"All I can say is," rejoined the discomfited Mrs. Wentworth, "that if the monitor were punished every time these fights occur, I think that he would soon find a way of preventing them."

At this concluding observation, a smile of intelligence, similar to the one I had witnessed the day before, passed between the head master and Thornton, upon which I was preparing to withdraw, when Mrs. Wentworth, changing the subject, asked me if I was aware that there were thirty guineas in my portmanteau.

I answered that I knew such a sum had been given to me when I left home, but that I had thought no more of it since.

"'Tis a great deal of money for so young a boy," rejoined Mrs.

Wentworth, looking at her husband: "had I not better keep it for him, and give it to him when he wants it?"

The doctor assented, recommending that I should receive about two shillings a week, and Mrs. Wentworth desired me to come to her every Monday morning for that purpose.

On the following day I was standing alone in the playground, when Thornton passed me with a book in his hand. Suddenly stopping, he looked round and said, "Rockingham, I hope you understand, that in letting you fight it out the other day, I had only in view what was best for yourself; as I may not always be there to protect you, it is better that you should learn to protect yourself."

"Oh! I am sure you did it for the best, sir," answered I; "I am so sorry that I should have been the cause of any unpleasant observation being addressed to you."

"Never mind," replied he, smiling; "I am accustomed to that." He was moving on, when our eyes met again.

"Well," resumed he, reading my thoughts, "what would you ask?"

"Why," said I, mustering my utmost courage, "I should so like to know why you and Mrs. Wentworth are not better friends?"

"But we are very good friends, surely. Is there anything in my behaviour to her that leads you to think the reverse?"

"Oh, no!" replied I; "but something she said—I mean, something in her manner to you."

"You must not think that she means all she says, or all she looks," answered Thornton, fixing his eyes very intently upon me. "But I see you are not quite satisfied yet."

"No!" replied I, encouraged by his manner; "I long to know what you really think of her?"

"What I think of her? Well, I think that she seems very fond of you, and that you must do your best that she may remain so. She is the worst enemy and the best friend that you could have here. Oh, far more than me!" continued he, again guessing my thoughts. "I have not the same power to protect you as long as we are friends, nor should I have the same inclination to be harsh with you, were we otherwise."

"Yet you do not seem to mind very much what she says to you."

"I am a monitor, and by the rules of the school can no longer be punished, except upon most serious charges. You are not in that position, and must, therefore, be more careful. I daresay you know already," continued he, smiling, "that she does not wish you to be on terms of great intimacy with me. You will do well to avoid any such appearance, bearing in mind, that I shall always be most happy to offer you any advice and assistance in my power, the more so, that our families were in former days intimately acquainted. Should Mrs. Wentworth pass any censures upon me, you will have many opportunities of deciding whether or not they are well founded."

He was again moving onwards, but after a moment's hesitation, "Rockingham," rejoined he, "I should be sorry that you should misconstrue my unwillingness to answer your question about Mrs. Wentworth in any way unfavourable to her. We occasionally do not agree upon some minor points connected with the discipline of the school. I think she has not quite judgment and experience enough for the full amount of authority she is allowed more and more every day to exercise here, and that she sometimes shows an unnecessary degree of severity towards the younger boys. But we have all our faults, and great allowances should be made for her, for she was, I believe, herself very severely brought up, and has already, as I have been told, known sorrows which would have hardened far more a less generous heart."

"I believe also," said I, most anxious to prolong the conversation, "that the boys have, at times, behaved very ill to her."

"Certainly; and have often deserved to be punished for it, but not perhaps with the rigour she occasionally displays towards some of the offenders. Boys are but children, and should be treated as such; men and women are, or ought to be, reasonable beings, and should not, as I conceive, be led into the petty contests we too often witness here. And now that I have told you upon this point all that it is really essential for you to know, it is better that we should part."

He left me, but I was not alone. The deep tones of his impressive voice still resounded in my ears, his dark blue eye still seemed to read into my soul, and for that day Mrs. Wentworth was forgotten.

The class which Dr. Wentworth had prevailed upon his wife to undertake was held by her in the dining-room, a part of which was on Sundays cleared for this purpose. The boys of the under-school, amounting generally to about forty, were marshalled in two rows, the monitor sitting at one end, while Mrs. Wentworth alternately sat or stood at the other. It was required of every fourth-form boy, that he should repeat and be thoroughly conversant with the collect, epistle, and gospel of the day, which were, for this purpose, on every previous Sunday, read over and carefully explained; the whole intervening week being thus allowed for the necessary preparation. The gospel alone, or a portion of it, was expected from the two junior forms. As the class lasted nearly two hours, one of a series of discourses on the rise of the Protestant faith, and on the church catechism was also generally read and commented upon.

On the Sunday following my arrival at Ashton, I entered with the other boys, and stood at the lower end of the room, waiting until my place should be assigned to me. Soon after we were assembled Mrs. Wentworth appeared.

"She will not be very savage to-day," whispered my young neighbour to me.

"Why so?" said I.

"Because Charles Thornton is not monitor."

Nothing certainly could look less savage than Mrs. Wentworth's smiling eyes. She opened the prayer-book, called upon several

boys to repeat the appointed lessons, and put to them and to others many questions respecting the more difficult passages. I was surprised to see with what accuracy the business was gone through—far more, as it struck me, than at any other class. One boy only hesitated three or four times while repeating his gospel; but as he appeared to be rather a favourite, he escaped with an injunction to say the whole over again before bed-time.

I was not long, however, in remarking that though outwardly very attentive and overawed by the presence of their mistress, the boys would occasionally break out, when her eye was averted, into some sign of aversion or contempt for her, or of joy at having successfully escaped from some ominous cross-questioning. These symptoms of insubordination were not always unnoticed.

"Jones, what are you making those absurd faces for?" said Mrs. Wentworth suddenly, in the calmest voice, and a smile still playing upon her lips. Well did the boys know that smile, which was scarcely less dreaded than the tooth-pick of Coligni. "Jones, come here if you please."

The culprit, a very little lad, approached evidently in a state of great uneasiness. A very sharp box on the ear was administered to him, first on one side then on the other, with an admonition that his name would be reported if he began again.

When the first portion of the business had been got through, the monitor was summoned to read the discourse for the day. During this lecture the word *Hegira* occurred.

"Mills," said Mrs. Wentworth, interrupting the monitor for a moment, "what does the *Hegira* mean?"

This question was addressed to a tall, heavy boy, who, as it appeared to me, was standing wonderfully low down in the school for his age. He was, as I afterwards learned, a particular victim of Mrs. Wentworth's, having been, as she thought at least, one of the principal actors in the fatal attack upon her dog.

The heavy boy looked much perplexed.

"Come, say something," continued she? "tell me, at least, what sort of a thing it is? Is it a book, or is it a place?"

"Please ma'am," faltered Mills, "it is a book."

"Written by whom?"

"By—by—Mahomet," answered the victim, imperfectly catching a word of assistance, whispered by his neighbour.

"I shall come to you presently, sir, for prompting," said Mrs. Wentworth to the latter. And so the *Hegira* is a book written by Mahomet," continued she again addressing the luckless Mills; "pray when were you reported last?"

"I don't remember," said the victim, already fully aware of his impending fate.

"Perhaps it will make more impression this time," resumed Mrs. Wentworth. "Monitor, you will put down Mills's name in the report for incorrigible inattention. I no later than Sunday last fully explained every particular of Mahomet's life and doctrines. And now, Smith," continued she, addressing the prompter. "what have you to say?"

Smith's notions appeared to me to be pretty accurate; but the questions were pressed so rapidly that he was soon perplexed, the more so that he felt his ultimate doom to be already sealed; and his name was soon placed on the fatal list by that of his neighbour.

As yet Mrs. Wentworth had put no question to me.

"Can you, Rockingham, tell me something about the Hegira?" said she now.

Though a little abashed by the unexpected interrogation, I explained that the Hegira was the Mahometan era, reckoning from the date of the flight of Mahomet from Mecca.

"You say that it is the Mahometan era. What is the Christian era?"

"The death of Christ."

"The Roman?"

"The building of the city."

"The Grecian?"

"The first Olympiad."

"What are the dates of the two latter?"

They were familiar to me, and I stated them correctly.

"Can you tell me what the present year is, according to the Mahometan computation?"

After a moment's reflection, I answered, "We are in the one thousand seven hundred and ninety-second year from Christ. The Hegira occurred in the six hundred and twenty-second; the Moslems must reckon this year their one thousand one hundred and seventieth."

"Very well, indeed," said Mrs. Wentworth; and the monitor was ordered to continue.

Seldom did my heart throb with a deeper feeling of pleasure than at these few words of commendation.

Soon afterwards some allusion was made in the discourse to the Hussites.

"Can any one explain who the Hussites were?" said Mrs. Wentworth.

No one appeared anxious to answer.

"Can you, Rockingham?" inquired she, with a protecting smile.

"They were a sect of early reformers, so called after their founder—John Huss." I then answered some questions respecting the life and death of this reformer and of Jerome of Prague, with whose history, during my residence at the rectory, I had become well acquainted.

"Come to the head of the class," said Mrs. Wentworth, at last; "none here could answer as you have done. Why you are a doctor in divinity!" and she laid her hand upon my head as I assumed the place of honour at her right hand.

Elated beyond measure at this first triumph, I applied to my general studies with redoubled energy. The spirit of emulation was fully aroused within me, and I longed to win, in the third form, the high rank which had been conferred upon me by Mrs. Wentworth in her class. But my imperfect knowledge of many of the technical forms and set phrases already familiar to most of my

companions, gave them an advantage over me with which I could not always successfully compete.

One day, towards the latter end of the ensuing week, the French master being unwell, Thornton was deputed to take charge of the third form. From a very few questions he addressed to me, he discovered, with his usual perspicacity, that though less intimately acquainted than those around me with the Grammar itself, I was far more advanced than they were in real intelligence and knowledge of the Latin language. Seeing, besides, that it was in my nature ardently to contend for supremacy, he sought me during the ensuing play-hour, and explained to me, with great lucidity, the points upon which my information was as yet insufficient. A very few observations from him made me completely aware of the rudimental forms with which it was requisite that I should be thoroughly acquainted; and when this was achieved, I soon attained the desired eminence.

I should then have been completely happy, had I not remarked, that though most anxious to propitiate my schoolfellows in general, yet I remained singularly unconnected with them, and evidently was considered by them with a certain amount of suspicion and dislike. This circumstance I one day mentioned to Mordaunt, who, notwithstanding his taciturn and unsociable disposition, had not forgotten Thornton's recommendation, and showed no unwillingness to give me the information and advice I occasionally sought from him. He told me that he had remarked the feeling which had excited my attention and regret, but that he attributed it merely to a slight and not unnatural degree of jealousy at the marks of favour I had received from Mrs. Wentworth and from Thornton, as well as at my early successes in the class. This explanation did not entirely reconcile me to my position; still I felt no inclination to sacrifice in any way those advantages that thus promoted the sentiments of estrangement which nevertheless I did not cease to deplore.

On the two Sundays subsequent to that on which I had been promoted to the head of Mrs. Wentworth's class, I succeeded in fully maintaining and justifying that much-envied rank. For the second of these days, Thornton was the appointed monitor, and the cloud which passed over Mrs. Wentworth's brow as she entered, and beheld him at his post, forcibly reminded me of the observation which had been made to me by my neighbour when I had first joined the class. Still, as the lesson had been well learned, and the behaviour of the boys was exemplary, no act of severity was at first in any way called for. Towards the middle of the class, however, Mrs. Wentworth very abruptly addressed to the monitor the following observations:—

"I thought I had requested, Mr. Thornton, that you would not allow any boy to come before me here in a disorderly and neglectful state?"

Thornton respectfully signified his assent to this proposition.

"Then how comes it, pray, that Williams's hands are so covered with ink?"

"Indeed, ma'am, I had not remarked it."

"That is just what I complain of," said Mrs. Wentworth, in her coldest manner. Williams was summoned, received a box on the ear, and was told that he had to thank Mr. Thornton's negligence for it.

Thornton appeared a little annoyed at this incident, but he made no observation. When called upon to read as usual the discourse, it was impossible for him completely to satisfy Mrs. Wentworth: he now read too loud, then too low, sometimes too quick, at other times too slowly. To all these observations he attended most scrupulously, betraying no impression, saving by the slight smile, which any new token of the wayward disposition of his fair persecutor would occasionally provoke. I also remarked that, instead of making herself the usual commentaries upon the more difficult passages of the lecture, she desired Thornton to explain them, not, as it appeared to me, without a slight hope that he would occasionally show himself inadequate to the task. If such was indeed her expectation, it was not fulfilled on that day—nothing occurred which Thornton was not capable of expounding in the clearest manner, always, however, glancing at Mrs. Wentworth, in order to ascertain whether his illustrations met with her approval.

CHAPTER IV.

And, moreover, I saw under the Sun, the Place of Judgment, that Wickedness was there; and the Place of Righteousness, that Iniquity was there.—ECCII.

DURING the first three months of my stay at Ashton, no other incident took place which has left any lasting impression upon my mind. I continued to distinguish myself in every branch of my studies; Mrs. Wentworth's demeanour towards me was daily more affectionate, and my feelings for her grew constantly more tender and more intense. But, alas! for the infirmity of our nature; ever undervaluing the blessings imparted to us, and longing for those which are denied. The cold and repulsive bearing of my school-fellows towards me wounded me deeply. I felt that I was considered by them as an alien, and even as a spy. My short interviews on every Monday morning with Mrs. Wentworth, to receive my appointed allowance, were, with the greatest injustice stigmatised as an occasion sought for on both sides to obtain and impart information with respect to the more secret proceedings of the school.

Had this accusation been publicly made, I should have repelled it with the scorn it deserved; but the imputation was never *openly preferred*, though, as I could not doubt, it was generally *whispered and accredited* around me. How could I face it? how *could I grapple with it?* Gladly would I have consulted Thornton

upon this point, but his manner to me had also grown reserved in the extreme. This I deplored perhaps still more than the estrangement of all my other schoolfellows. I had, from the first moment I beheld him, felt myself irresistibly attracted to this boy. The beauty of his features, the grace of his bearing, and, still more, that indescribable air of deep reflection which distinguished him from all around, would alone have prepossessed me in his favour. But I had besides received from him marks of sympathy which I could never forget; invaluable advice, and the kindest assistance, in the hour of my utmost need. I longed to associate with him, to testify the gratitude which filled my heart, and commune with that rare and commanding intellect which was revealed in every word that fell from him. Could it be that, with him also, the marked favour shown to me by Mrs. Wentworth had become a motive for suspicion and estrangement?

Why did he thus avoid me? Was I never again to see his protecting eye fixed upon me;—was I never more to hear the deep pensive tones of his voice opening before me boundless and unsuspected fields of knowledge to be acquired, of duties to be performed, of difficulties to be overcome? Was I to sacrifice thus, to an unexplained prejudice of Mrs. Wentworth's, this priceless intercourse; for one transient smile from her to forego the hourly pleasure which might be so easily attained? Above all, does Thornton think that I am debarred from marking my friendship and gratitude from the fear of a woman's frown?

I was in this frame of mind, when, one day at dinner, I heard many not unfounded complaints uttered around me, with respect to the food which had been set before us. Thornton's seat was at the extremity of the table, where I had been at first placed, not very far from him; and he recommended to us, both by his precept and his example, not to show any symptoms of displeasure at this occurrence, which was probably quite accidental. This advice, however, was not followed; Mrs. Wentworth's eye was soon attracted to the unwelcome sight of ten or twelve boys consecutively, most ostentatiously abstaining from eating what was placed before them, and she approached the table.

"What new business or conspiracy is this?" said she to Thornton.

He was evidently at a loss how to reply, as he could neither entirely blame nor exculpate his neighbours.

"Well," continued she, "surely there must be some reason, and I am surprised you should not have ascertained it."

Thornton was preparing to reply, but the spirit of justice was aroused within me at the undeserved censure which her manner towards him appeared to convey, and I unguardedly flew to the rescue.

"Please ma'am," said I, with the emphasis peculiar to school-boys, "we don't eat the meat, because it is too bad to be touched."

If Mrs. Wentworth's favourite dog had, during its lifetime, flown at her, and lacerated the small fair hand which was cherishing him, she could not have testified more astonishment and irritation

than her countenance manifested at this unexpected observation. She literally stepped back in amazement; but before she had made any reply, the head master's attention had been drawn to the spot, and he inquired of her what had occurred.

"Some new impertinence on the part of the boys," she said; "who are beginning again to pretend that their dinner is not to their taste."

"I shall certainly make an example of some of them," answered the doctor, but at the same time preparing to examine the food. The result, however, of this inspection was not what Mrs. Wentworth expected. "I must say," said he, "my dear Isabella, that this time the boys are not in the wrong."

Mrs. Wentworth seemed to me unaccountably annoyed at this statement, and was evidently preparing to contest the point, when the doctor said, rather sharply:—

"Come, come, my dear, there can be but one opinion upon the matter."

"Well, all I can say is," rejoined she, hastily, "that I cannot be responsible for these accidents, which are inevitable sometimes."

"Nobody says you are responsible," replied the doctor, sternly, "nor is there any reason that you should be offended; the less so, that you yourself courted the inquiry."

Mrs. Wentworth was evidently much irritated at the harsh manner in which this reproof was conveyed, and appeared on the point of uttering some angry answer, but her better judgment prevailed, and she remained silent.

When we adjourned to the playground, Thornton, who had not spoken to me for nearly a month, sought me, and said: "I very much regret, Rockingham, that you made that observation respecting the dinner to-day. It is a very sore subject with Mrs. Wentworth, and I fear that you have really offended her."

"I am very sorry for it," answered I, "and I had no such intention; but I could not bear to see you, who had given us the best advice, unjustly reproached."

"My dear fellow," said the monitor, laying his hand upon my head, "I have already advised you, and I again do so most strenuously, not to attend to any remarks made by Mrs. Wentworth to me. She is very kind to you, and it is your duty to testify your gratitude to her, and to avoid every occasion of giving her annoyance."

"But how could I tell that she would be mortally offended at so simple an observation."

"It is very unlucky, to be sure, that you were not aware that this is an old grievance and quarrel between her and the pupils. It would have been bad enough if the doctor had not interfered; but the reproof she had to endure from him, the first that I have ever seen him convey to her before the boys, has made matters ten times worse. I saw her whole frame tremble, and the tears standing in her eyes. I fear that she will not easily forgive you your share in the transaction."

"Well, what is to be done? shall I go to her, and make some apology?"

"Let me see," answered Thornton, after a moment's reflection: "I am not sure that it would be wise to disturb her at this moment, and raise the question anew, when she may be still under the excitement of the incident. Perhaps, after all, I may be mistaken. At all events, as to-day is Saturday, watch very carefully at class to-morrow her manner towards you. Should it appear to you in any way altered, you will, on Monday morning, have a natural opportunity of meeting her, and of expressing to her your hope that she did not misconstrue your intention to-day."

I thanked Thornton for his kind advice, and promised to follow it: but I could not forbear adding, that whatever the consequences might be, I was happy to have learned on this occasion that he had not withdrawn his friendship from me.

"I?" answered he. "Could you have any doubt on that point?"

"Yes, your manner of late has been so distant."

"My manner! never attend to my manner, for my thoughts are not always here—but rest assured of my sincere friendship."

He moved on, and no sooner had he left me, than I was surrounded by a group of boys. Secretly overjoyed at the annoyance which I had given to Mrs. Wentworth, they complimented me loudly on the courage I had displayed, and declared that I was a better fellow than they had taken me for. Having long and ardently desired to be on an intimate and familiar footing with my comrades, and hoping still that Thornton's misgivings might prove unfounded, I was very much gratified and elated at this unsought and unexpected popularity. I assured my new friends that they had most unfairly judged me, if they conceived that I had any other feelings or wishes than those which I could entertain in common with them, and that I should not desert the good cause of my schoolfellows, should it ever require my support.

I did not fail on the following day to mark very attentively Mrs. Wentworth's manner to me at her class, and nothing there occurred which could absolutely justify Thornton's forebodings. I could not but observe, however, that for the first time on that day, she addressed no question whatever to me, and gave me therefore no opportunity of showing how intently I had laboured during the week to fulfil her expectations, and to maintain my prominent position.

On the next day I went as usual to receive my allowance, anxiously preparing to offer, if possible, some explanation to her, according to Thornton's advice, but I found her engaged in deep conversation with a strange lady; and having received my two shillings, which she handed to me hastily, I retired, without having found an opportunity of addressing her.

During the ensuing week, the apprehension which Thornton's conversation had raised within me, gradually subsided. I ardently and successfully cultivated my now intimate acquaintance with my schoolfellows; and being assured by Thornton's manner that his friendship for me was unaltered, I felt perfectly satisfied.

happy. But, alas! the Tarpeian rock is for ever the nearest neighbour to the Capitol: those few days during which I proudly conceived that I had obtained every object of my wishes and ambition, were but the forerunners of a long train of disappointment and misfortune.

On the subsequent Sunday Thornton was again monitor. Mrs. Wentworth at first addressed no question to me; but another boy, who before my arrival had been generally the head of her class, having answered with some precision the questions she had put to him, was desired by her to take the first place. I felt the more annoyed at this preference, that I could myself have answered equally well, but I concealed my mortification as I best could. While I was musing upon this first exemplification of Thornton's ominous misgivings, I was suddenly called upon by Mrs. Wentworth to explain a difficult passage in the epistle of the day; I was so absorbed by my reflections, that I scarcely heard the question, and was wholly unprepared with the answer.

"Go down to the bottom of the class," said Mrs. Wentworth coldly to me. "I thoroughly explained every expression of this passage on Sunday last."

This was perfectly true; but I had been for the first time on the previous Sunday an inattentive listener, my whole mind being then devoted to my speculations with regard to Thornton's warning. I was deeply grieved at my complete and unexpected downfall; but my mortified feelings threw me into a state, not of prostration, but of excitement, which betrayed me into new errors.

A young boy, who deservedly occupied the place next to that which had just been assigned to me, and who was a careless, merry-hearted little reprobate, having soon after escaped pretty well from an ordeal of not very abstruse questions, testified his satisfaction by indulging, as soon as Mrs. Wentworth's look was withdrawn, in a series of most extraordinary grimaces. The contortions of his features were such as I had never before witnessed, and I unfortunately burst into a fit of very imperfectly suppressed laughter.

In a moment Mrs. Wentworth's eye was upon me, and I felt that my fate was fast approaching.

"Rockingham," said she, "come here. I had hoped," she continued, when I was close to her, "that you would not be quite insensible to the humiliation you have this day brought upon yourself. I find that I have been completely mistaken with respect to your character, and that I must, with you, resort to some other description of punishment."

She raised her hand, and I received the expected box on the ear.

How was it that I then felt nothing of that indignation which had swelled my heart when a far slighter blow from my school-fellow was first threatened? Why did I experience none of that burning passion to repel and to resent the affront? But the blood of the Rockinghams was now unmoved within me, the spirit of my mother alone prevailed, and I burst into tears.

I had, within the last week, become a great favourite with my companions, and though my punishment was certainly neither undeserved nor excessive, they, unfortunately for me, testified their disapprobation by a low, but general murmur.

"I am sorry for you, Rockingham," said Mrs. Wentworth; but acting up to the rule which she invariably followed in similar occurrences, she administered a second blow, which I attempted neither to deprecate nor to avoid.

Since my encounter, on the day subsequent to my arrival at Ashton, I had been subject to a bleeding of the nose, which would recur at any shock, however slight, that I might experience. It was thus that the second visitation from Mrs. Wentworth's slender hand produced an effect for which all around, except myself, must have been totally unprepared.

At the sight of my blood, Mrs. Wentworth was evidently moved, and turned very pale.

"It is nothing, ma'am," whispered I to her; "I am accustomed to it."

Unfortunately my comrades had seen me endeavouring to the utmost of my power to conceal in my handkerchief the flowing blood, and a new and unconcerted murmur of resentment burst from them.

Mrs. Wentworth was recalled to herself by the fresh symptoms of insubordination which were thus breaking out. Her eyes first met those of Thornton, who was standing near her, and whose countenance very strongly expressed regret and disapprobation: she looked him steadfastly in the face, and then deliberately glancing round at the mutinous class, she said:

"Your schoolfellow must thank you if his punishment is again increased in consequence of these murmurs, which I am determined to put down, at any price. I shall expect Rockingham to repeat to me, on Sunday next, the whole of the second lesson for this day: should I hear the slightest whisper, I shall be besides obliged to report him to the doctor."

I watched, not without some apprehension, what the effect of these words would be upon my companions: happily the warning was attended to, and no further murmur was heard.

"Have you any observation to offer, sir?" said Mrs. Wentworth to Thornton, when she saw that her authority was fully re-established in the class.

"None, whatever, ma'am, upon this occurrence," answered the monitor; marking clearly, by his intonation, that he might have some general reflections to make with respect to the policy of the system thus exemplified.

Mrs. Wentworth's fair brow was for a moment contracted, but she thought it wiser to press her questions no further. I was dismissed again to the lower end of the class, and the usual business proceeded.

I watched with the utmost anxiety the moment of my interview with Mrs. Wentworth on the following day. I felt that Thornton had been a true prophet, and that her favour had been, indeed

withdrawn from me. Still, as I had been punished far more than she had originally contemplated or perhaps desired, she might now consider the atonement sufficient, and again be disposed to restore to me the light of her countenance. I was much disappointed when I heard that she was gone out for the day on a party of pleasure, and that the monitor had been enjoined by her to remit to me my weekly allowance.

CHAPTER V.

Make not too rash a trial of him, for
He's gentle, and not fearful.—*TEMPEST.*

ABOUT this time a vacancy having occurred, a new pupil arrived at Ashton. He was a dark-haired, good-looking boy of about my own age, and with full my share of pride, being the eldest son of a nobleman, who resided in the neighbourhood. He had already been at another school, and was immediately on the best terms with all his new companions. On the following Sunday, this boy, whose name was Rochford, and who had been placed in the third form, was introduced to Mrs. Wentworth's class. When she entered, she called him to her and desired him, with her kindest voice and manner, to stand at the bottom of the class, until his fair rank could be ascertained: "Not quite at the bottom, however," added she—"Stand last but one, Rochford—the last boy is there for ill-conduct."

That last boy was myself. She then called me and desired me to repeat the task she had appointed on the previous Sunday. She heard me with the utmost severity from the first word to the last, and though I repeated perfectly every syllable, she merely said, when I had concluded:

"That will do; go back to your place."

The usual business of the class now proceeded, and some allusions having been made to the earlier portions of the Old Testament, Mrs. Wentworth asked the first boy by whom they had been written? He could not answer, nor the second either, and so the question went round the school. Saving one boy who emitted, rather hesitatingly, the surmise that they had been composed by our Saviour himself, nobody attempted to reply until the interrogation had reached Rochford. He immediately and very correctly named the books which had been written by Moses, and was desired, in the most flattering terms, to come to the head of the school. How well I could have myself answered the question had it been put to me!

Soon afterwards, Mrs. Wentworth was called away for a moment, and left the class in charge of the monitor. He, wishing to make an extract from the book he held in his hand, desired me to bring

him a pen and some ink from the other end of the room. I immediately obeyed this injunction, when, on my return, as I was passing close to the new boy, my foot slipped and I most accidentally threw a portion of the contents of the inkstand, which was full to overflowing, upon his new white trousers. Rochford uttered an angry exclamation, and pushed me from him. I attempted to explain how very much I regretted the accident, but he struck me in the face. I immediately returned the blow, and just then, as the monitor was rushing up to separate us, Mrs. Wentworth re-entered the room.

"Well, upon my word!" exclaimed she, "this is as bad as ever. How did this begin?"

"Please, ma'am," cried I, "he struck me first."

"Not till he had thrown all this ink over me, ma'am," retorted Rochford.

"I must say, madam," interposed the monitor, "that I do not think Rockingham threw the ink purposely."

"I am sure he did," exclaimed Rochford.

"And so am I," said Mrs. Wentworth. "It is all his spite and jealousy because Rochford has distinguished himself; but I will soon settle the question. Rochford, he was striking you just as I came in. You have my full leave for boxing his ears in return, and it will besides save me the trouble. As to you, sir," continued she, turning to me, "remember that it is by my order that Rochford does so, and offer resistance at your peril."

However determined I was never to disobey Mrs. Wentworth, or to give her any fresh cause of irritation against me, I felt that my patience was here put to the very severest test. Still I submitted to the infliction she commanded, vowing in my heart that sooner or later I should settle the matter with the new-comer.

"And now," said she, "beg Rochford's pardon for what you have done."

"I beg your pardon, Rochford," said I, repeating her words.

"Very well; you may go back to your place," resumed Mrs. Wentworth. "By Sunday next, you shall repeat to me the two lessons for the day, and mind you know them well, except you wish to be reported to the doctor, which I am already very much inclined to do now. Beware also how you enter into any kind or sort of difference with Rochford, or I will take care that you suffer for it."

I withdrew in silence, but not the less determined to seize the first opportunity of fighting the new boy at any risk. Oh! the joy, the deep thrilling ecstasy of that forthcoming conflict. The base vindictiveness of unprovoked malignity and envy, I trust I have never harboured and never known; but the exalted aspiration of the soul for the avenging hour of fair and open contest with those who have inflicted undeserved insult, or claimed unjustified supremacy, that feeling I have experienced, and with it, I will own, a rapture as deep as any that life has ever afforded.

So absorbed was I by this train of sentiment, that I was scarcely aware of the point which having been less successfully elucidated

by Rochford than by the second boy, restored to the latter his previous rank at the head of the class.

Soon afterwards, Mrs. Wentworth interrogating some of the intermediate boys, a question arose as to St. Paul's travels and the place where he was shipwrecked. This question passed unanswered down the class to the very end. How easily and satisfactorily could I have replied to it, but what would have been my reward? Could I hope that it entered into Mrs. Wentworth's intentions to restore me to my former eminence, however I might testify my aptitude? I thus allowed the question to go by me in silence; it was then addressed to the first boy, and he offering no reply, Rochford answered it and recovered the first place.

"I think you might at least have known that St. Paul was wrecked at Malta," said Mrs. Wentworth, sarcastically to me.

"Please, ma'am, I did know it," replied I.

"Then why did you not say so before?"

"Because, ma'am, I was not sure that you wished me to answer it."

"Do not tell me such nonsense; of course I did, as the question passed your way. Indeed, I don't believe that you knew anything about it, or if you did, you can tell me at what island St. Paul touched before he reached Malta?"

"In Crete."

"What is Crete called now?"

"Candia, ma'am."

"Where was the apostle going?"

"To Rome, ma'am."

"And where did he embark from?"

"I do not know, ma'am."

"If you could have answered that, perhaps I might have raised you a little. He embarked at Caesarea."

Mrs. Wentworth did not inquire whether any other boy could have replied either to this question or to its forerunners, and I was therefore left, not very fairly, as I thought, in my fallen position. I still occupied it when we were interrupted by the entrance of the head master, in company with one of the trustees, who had come to pass the day with him. Dr. Wentworth having inquired who was the best boy, was told that it was Rochford.

"And who is that last one?" asked the trustee, "he does not appear to be one of the youngest."

"But he is the very worst I have," answered Mrs. Wentworth.

"What is his name?"

"Rockingham."

"Is he any relation to Lord Arlingford?"

"His son."

"Indeed. I am very sorry to hear this account of him, for I know his father well."

Though Dr. Wentworth, who had called the monitor to him, *did not*, as I trusted, overhear this short dialogue between his wife and the stranger, I was not the less grieved to the heart at the expressions she had used with respect to me.

No sooner was the class over, than I ran to Thornton and reported to him fully the events of the day, omitting only any allusion to my intention of challenging Rochford. This I did in the course of the evening, but scarcely had our encounter began, with great ardour on both sides, than my protector, who guessing my purpose had closely followed all my movements, interposed so strenuously that we were obliged to desist. I had, however, full time to administer to the new-comer a black eye, which I must say he endeavoured on the following day so effectually to conceal from Mrs. Wentworth, that she did not notice it.

On the next morning I again received my allowance from the monitor, Mrs. Wentworth being, as he informed me, particularly engaged.

In the course of the afternoon I had with Thornton a long conversation. He told me that from what had occurred on the two previous Sundays, he could have no doubt but that I had managed very deeply to offend Mrs. Wentworth, and that she would now single me out as one of her victims. On the other hand, I had decidedly been placed too low in the school upon my first arrival, and I was in every way qualified for the fourth form; if promoted there, I should be in the upper school, dispensed as such with attending Mrs. Wentworth's Sunday class, and thus withdrawn in a great measure from the reach of her resentment. His intention, therefore, was to suggest to the doctor the propriety of placing me at once in the fourth form.

I could not but acknowledge how friendly and judicious was this plan of Thornton's; yet I felt my heart sink at the thoughts that I should be removed from the control of my fair instructress, still so beloved, though now so dreaded.

I experienced an unaccountable diffidence in imparting this sentiment to my friend, yet I could not wholly conceal it from him. He fully entered into my feelings upon the matter, but was not overruled by them. He represented to me that my promotion to the fourth form was in a short space of time inevitable, that according to all probability I should in no case be allowed now to remain in the under school long enough to regain Mrs. Wentworth's goodwill, while during the short time I should naturally be still under her more immediate authority, events might occur which would seriously affect my position.

As yet I had not been reported to the doctor and publicly punished; it was very desirable at my age, and with my anxiety, to deserve approbation and regard, that this distinction should not be forfeited as it any day might, should I remain connected as at present with Mrs. Wentworth, disposed as she was towards me.

These reflections of Thornton, the truth of which I could not but recognise, did not in any way convert me. I again laboured to impress upon his mind how infinitely I preferred my present situation, with all its perils, to a complete estrangement from Mrs. Wentworth, and I urged my opinion so earnestly, that at length he appeared to acquiesce in my objections. I therefore *thought and trusted that the question had been set at rest, when*

three days afterwards I was desired by Dr. Wentworth to place myself in the fourth form.

Though much startled and grieved at this intelligence, I did not venture to remonstrate with the head master, but I lost no time in imparting my sorrow to Thornton. He smiled, and said that he had unfortunately no power to reverse the decision of the head master. I next addressed myself to the French master, expressing my sincere regret at being withdrawn from him. He very kindly assured me that he would always be happy to give me his assistance and advice; but he added that, as I was really superior in information to the rest of his class, he thought it but fair that I should be removed from competition with them.

What was I to do? I could not rest under this fatal sentence as long as I could hope that by any effort on my part it might still be reversed. So great was my regret that I conceived the notion of appealing to Mrs. Wentworth herself; but how was I to see her,—how was I to address her? As no time was to be lost, I summoned my utmost courage, and when the boys withdrew from dinner, on that very day, I hung back, and moved towards the place where she was standing.

When she saw me approach, her eye was fixed upon me; but, alas! her look was so altered and so distant that it froze the life-blood to my heart, and when in her coldest voice she asked me if I wanted anything—

“Nothing, ma’am,” faltered I; and I withdrew.

On the following Sunday, the appointed monitor having obtained a holiday, delegated his duties to Thornton. When Mrs. Wentworth entered, she appeared surprised and displeased to see him so soon again in that capacity, and asked him the motive, which he explained in a few words. As I had three days before joined the fourth form, Thornton had desired me to stand by him now, that I might repeat to Mrs. Wentworth the task which she had assigned to me on the previous Sunday, and then join the class which, at about the same time, and for the same purpose, the under-master held for the boys of the upper school. When Thornton had answered her hasty inquiry respecting himself, she turned to me and demanded of me coldly why I was not standing at the place to which she had consigned me on the previous Sunday.

I replied that I came merely to repeat my task, as, during the week I had been promoted to the fourth form.

“To the fourth form!” said Mrs. Wentworth, evidently much surprised. “Was this done at your desire?”

“No, ma’am, I can assure you,” faltered I.

Mrs. Wentworth looked steadfastly at Thornton, and then said:

“I suppose, sir, this is some new scheme of yours?”

“I have no such power, madam,” answered the monitor, calmly.

“Exactly; you know nothing about it.”

“I did not quite say that, madam,” replied Thornton, while a *slight and almost imperceptible smile of triumph* played for an *instant upon his features*. “I must admit that I concurred in the

views of the doctor, and of the French master, with respect to Rockingham's advancement."

"I make no doubt you did, and I fully understand what you intend; but you may rest assured that it will not avail. No one here, whoever he may be, shall fail in his duty towards me with impunity."

"I trust, madam, that such can be no one's intention."

"Mrs. Wentworth shook her head impatiently, and then desired me to repeat my task, which I did most accurately.

"You may go now," she then said. "You have behaved very ill, and for my part I am delighted to be no longer responsible in any way for you; but remember that this contrivance of your new friend may not be as successful as you both no doubt imagine, for my eye will still be upon you."

"I don't care," answered I, deeply irritated and vexed at this harsh farewell.

"Perhaps I may find some means to make you care," replied she, in her sternest voice; and I withdrew.

Thus ended my connection with Mrs. Wentworth's class.

CHAPTER VI.

Look here, Iago,

All my fond love I thus do blow to Heaven.

Arise, black vengeance, from thy hollow cell!—OTHELLO.

On the following day, no message having been delivered to me from Mrs. Wentworth, I waited as usual on her to receive my weekly allowance, and I found her alone. She gave me my accustomed two shillings, and then, handing to me the whole of the money, said;—

"You had better take the remainder also; I do not wish to have charge of it any more."

"But please, ma'am, I do not know where to put it," muttered I, much grieved at this new mark of her irreconcilable displeasure.

"Do as you please," continued she; "I suppose your friend Thornton can keep it for you. Come, take it away."

I seized the money in very despair, threw it into the fire, and burst into tears.

Mrs. Wentworth appeared not to understand the feeling which swelled my boyish heart. "What do you mean by such conduct, sir?" said she impatiently; "leave my room, and never come near me again. I see your aunt was quite right, and that you are not fit to be in company with a lady."

I withdrew, without finding the means of offering any explanation, and shortly afterwards my money, which was in gold, and had been rescued from the fireplace by the direction of Mrs. Wentworth, was delivered to Thornton for my use. As soon as we met, my friend inquired into the circumstances which had led to this trust devolving upon him. Having listened very attentively to my tale,—

"My poor Rockingham," said he, "there really is a fate upon you in your intercourse with Mrs. Wentworth. She either totally misunderstands your character, or else she is so deeply offended with you, that she wilfully misconstrues all you say and do; however, I must tell you that your words are not always as judicious as your intentions. I do not think it was wise or right to defy her, as you did yesterday."

"I defy her?" cried I, in the greatest astonishment.

"Why, yes; when she told you that her eye would still be upon you, was it not absolute defiance to answer, that you did not care?"

"Indeed I had no such intention. I thought all she said to you and to me very unkind and very unfair, and was very much hurt by her manner; still I meant only to say that I had nothing to conceal from her, and had no reason to dread the scrutiny she threatened."

"I fear that could scarcely be her interpretation; however, what is said cannot be unsaid: the great point is that you should keep as clear of her as possible. You will now only meet at dinner, and on Sunday mornings, when you must be most cautious as to your behaviour and appearance. She is fully aware of our motives for withdrawing you from her class, and will, perhaps, be more cautious in testifying her resentment."

It has been truly said that misfortunes seldom come alone. I was fated, about this time to encounter fresh difficulties in another quarter. The boy with whom I had fought on the first day I had passed at Ashton, and whose name was Butler, had never recovered from the mortification he had endured in being apparently defeated by a new-comer, and had often been taunted since on this point by the school. I had constantly remarked that he was seeking some new cause of quarrel with me; but while I was happy and prosperous, I little heeded his manner towards me. I suppose about this time I was less enduring, for, upon a slight provocation on his part, my blood rose, our contest was renewed, and we determined upon a fresh and regular encounter. Thornton, to whom I mentioned all the circumstances, did not dissuade me from attempting finally to establish my character with my untiring aggressor: we therefore met, and fought *selon les regles*. At the end of a long conflict, my adversary declared himself fairly vanquished, but we both of us bore away many a token of the well-contested action.

On the following Sunday, when Mrs. Wentworth approached me, during the inspection of the boys previous to being conducted to church—

"Good Heavens! what a figure Rockingham is," exclaimed she; "there is every colour of the rainbow in his face. Surely he cannot have washed it during the week!"

The captain of the school, who usually attended Mrs. Wentworth on these occasions, came to my assistance, and explained *how it was that I was thus disfigured*. She immediately inquired *if Rochford had been my antagonist*; but this the captain, who

was aware of all the circumstances, was enabled most positively to deny.

"I am not at all surprised," continued Mrs. Wentworth, "that he should often expose himself to be thus treated by his school-fellows. However that may be, he shall not disgrace the school by going to church in such a state as this."

I was much mortified at these expressions of Mrs. Wentworth, and answered, in a less respectful tone, perhaps, than was due to her, that I could not help my face being bruised.

"Don't speak to me in this impertinent manner; I won't endure it. Go back to the schoolroom, and sit there while we are at church."

I reluctantly obeyed this order, and had two long hours to muse in solitude upon my fallen fortunes. Far greater, however, was my consternation when, on the following morning, I heard my name called over from the fatal report. So intense was my astonishment, that it was necessary for the monitor to repeat the summons in a loud voice, before I could bring myself to believe that it was really addressed to me. When my turn came, I saw that Dr. Wentworth was annoyed at being called upon to inflict the contemplated punishment upon me; he looked attentively at the list, as if hoping that it might be incorrect, and asked me how I had managed to offend Mrs. Wentworth, who was, at first, so fond of me.

I answered: "that I never intended to displease her, and that I was much surprised at finding my name on the report."

"Well, well, it is your first fault, I am not unwilling to remit the punishment, and I dare say, she will not object."

I much feared that the doctor was not interpreting very exactly his wife's intentions, but I lost no time in regaining my place, overjoyed at this narrow escape.

When recovered from the alarm into which this most unexpected occurrence had thrown me, I felt deeply grateful to the head master for the indulgence he had just shown me; but the persevering unkindness of Mrs. Wentworth, and the determination she so clearly evinced of bringing upon me a disgraceful and unmerited punishment, had now wounded me to the heart. I felt that all my former love was dead within me, and the whole pride of my soul revolted at the bare notion that I should make any further attempt to conciliate such relentless animosity. I sought, therefore, no new opportunity of addressing Mrs. Wentworth, and if our eyes still met, mine must have conveyed the feelings of resentment and defiance which had now taken possession of me.

For about a fortnight I was exposed to no new adventure, and I fondly hoped that the tide of my fortunes had turned again, when a fresh incident occurred, more fatal in its consequence than any which had yet befallen me.

It was upon a Sunday morning; I had as usual attended with the greatest precision to my dress, and my appearance was quite irreproachable, when unfortunately, it being rather late when we were summoned to the inspection, I slipped at the outer door of

the schoolroom. I rushed in with my comrades, effacing as hastily and as effectually as I could, the traces which this accident had left upon my hands and clothes, but on that day Mrs. Wentworth's brow was unusually clouded. When she approached me, she gave one glance at my disorderly appearance, and desired my name to be reported.

I raised my hands which had been slightly cut by my fall, but their appearance scarcely justified me, and before I could utter a word of explanation, Mrs. Wentworth recommended me not to make matters worse by my impertinence, and passed on.

Unfortunately the captain was absent on that day; I endeavoured in vain to appeal to the monitor, who was replacing him; but he was one of Mrs. Wentworth's most faithful subjects, and an impatient sign to be silent, and to go and brush my clothes, was his only answer to my attempted expostulation. This really unmerited act of severity made me desperate. I felt that it was useless to struggle against Mrs. Wentworth's determination to subject me to the doom I had as yet succeeded in averting, and I resolved upon making no further effort to withstand it.

When the fatal moment was approaching on the ensuing morning, I observed Thornton engaged in earnest conversation with the doctor. I saw by the light of his expanded eye, and by the animation of his glowing countenance, that he was discussing some matter which appeared to him of paramount interest, and I guessed that I was myself the object of his ardent appeal; but the head master was evidently inflexible this time. I was summoned, with seven of my companions, the greatest number which had ever been reported on a similar occasion, and was in my turn called upon to prepare for the appointed punishment. I then learned how great are the force of example, and the mysterious influence of discipline! When I had first beheld this penalty inflicted upon my schoolfellows, I had been amazed at what I considered their tame submission, and had almost vowed that no earthly power should ever exact from me such resignation as long as I had strength to resist. But now, the thought of entering into an unavailing and unbecoming struggle never crossed my mind, and one look from the monitor insured the required obedience.

When I repaired to the playground on that day, I was joined by Thornton, with whom I had not conversed for some time.

"Well, my poor Rockingham," said he, patting me upon the head, "it can't be helped, and it is all over now. She was determined that it should be so, and a wilful woman must have her way, as we have both yet to learn, perhaps in more momentous circumstances. I see that you are much grieved and dispirited; let me recommend you to think no more about it—the more so that I believe she has really done with you now. As to your companion, Mordaunt, I fear that he will cut his throat with despair; his case was still harder, for his clothes were quite clean, but worn out, and he never was flogged before, during four years that he *has been here*. Go to him and try to restore his spirits, for I have *quite failed in comforting him*."

But the mood in which I found my younger companion was far more congenial to my wounded spirit than the sagacious and temperate counsels of my protector. On that fatal morning, when my eye had for a moment met that of Mordaunt, it had been arrested, even in the midst of my own distress, by the more than boyish sternness and resolution which his look displayed. I was still more struck now by the concentrated and desperate energy which was revealed in his manner and bearing.

"I was wishing to see you, Rockingham," said he. "We have both to-day, for the first time, been most unjustly flogged, and thanks to the same person. If we have the means of being revenged upon her, I suppose that you will join?"

The spirit which had long been slumbering within me was fully awakened at this appeal, and I unhesitatingly answered in the affirmative.

"Seven of us were reported by her alone, yesterday," said Mordaunt. "Of these, four can be depended upon—I include you from what I have seen of you in your last fight with Butler, and this number will be quite sufficient for my purpose. We had better not be seen too much together now. If you will not fail me, I will call you up to-night about twelve, and in less than an hour, we will give some account of the garden, which is the only thing she cares for."

"Stay a moment," answered I. "Am I understand that we are to do some damage to Mrs. Wentworth's garden?"

"Exactly," said he.

"Oh, then, I would rather not be of the party."

"Indeed!" retorted Mordaunt, with a look of deep sarcasm. "Very well, I suppose, at least, I can depend upon your keeping our secret;" and he withdrew.

When we went in to dinner, I observed Mrs. Wentworth look hard at me and address a question to the doctor, which he appeared to answer in the affirmative. I fancied I then saw such a smile of derision and triumph play upon her lips, that all my blood glowed in my veins, and I vowed that I would yet be revenged. The instant dinner was over, I sought out Mordaunt, and told him that I would join him that night at any cost. He at first declined my offer, but seeing that I was in earnest and much excited, he at length acceded to my wishes.

No sooner was I alone, than my eyes were again opened to the true character of the proposed adventure, and I was more than once tempted, during the course of the evening, to enter upon the subject with Thornton. I felt, however, notwithstanding my recollection of the conversation I had overheard between him and the captain on the first day, that he would most strenuously disapprove of and oppose the execution of Mordaunt's scheme, and I considered myself, on this account, doubly pledged to observe the secrecy I had promised. When we retired to rest, I determined to be awake, so as to be ready for action at Mordaunt's first call; but nature and habit were stronger than my resolution, and I was plunged in the deepest sleep, when a low whisper from my compa-

nion aroused me. Seeing Mordaunt at my pillow already dressed, I rose, slipped on my clothes, and we succeeded in reaching the staircase without disturbing the heavy slumbers of our good-natured captain, who acted as superintendent of our room. We had still two confederates to arouse, and these slept in the room with Thornton. As Mordaunt was preparing to enter this chamber, I observed to him in a whisper, that it appeared to me more prudent in every respect, to proceed alone in the execution of our plans.

"You are right, I think," said he; "but it is too late now—all had been settled with them before I spoke to you, and they will never forgive me if I start without them. Beside, we may as well be four, so as to show some fight if the monitors come upon us."

Unwilling to prolong the discussion, I made no further objection, and Mordaunt soon after returned, followed by our two other associates. With silent steps we glided down the stairs, and gently unlocking the door to the garden, were soon intently engaged in our work of destruction. I had conceived that the war was to be waged merely against Mrs. Wentworth's flower-beds, but Mordaunt's revenge was not to be so easily satisfied. With a knife that he had sharpened for the occasion during the whole afternoon, the stems of the rarest creepers, the boughs of the choicest fruit-trees were severed, and all the treasures of the greenhouse itself lacerated in every direction. I attempted expostulation, but was answered only by a hoarse laugh of intense gratification.

"I will go no further, Mordaunt," said I, when I ascertained the real object of the expedition.

"As you please," answered he, coldly.

I would have arrested his hand, but he struck mine roughly aside.

"See here," said he, suddenly.

My eyes followed his, and in the faint light of one struggling moonbeam we discerned a dark figure issuing from the house, and following fast upon our traces.

"A monitor," cried our fearless leader. "Close upon him, and we shall be more than a match for him."

But Thornton was not alone: the stalworth captain was soon at his side, and seized one of our party. Mordaunt and I were secured by Thornton; the fourth, gliding under the bushes, contrived to escape.

"How many have you, captain?" said Thornton.

"Only one, and I thought I saw four."

"I think not; I have two; but I can't see any others," replied Thornton.

"Well, we must secure those we have, and identify them. It appears to have been a desperate business; my fellow was cutting the stem of a fig-tree when I seized him."

The night was again as dark as pitch, and we thought it impossible for our captors to recognise us until we reached the house, where a light was kept always burning.

"I shall make a struggle at the doorway," whispered Mordaunt in my ear; "do you try and bolt."

He was as good as his word, and as we approached the door he made a desperate effort to break away.

"Now then, Mordaunt, for this must be you," said Thornton; "you had better stay quiet, for you know that you are no match for me." But at the same time, I felt the iron grasp of my protector relaxing from my collar, and I could perfectly hear the words, "Look sharp, and mind that you set your things straight."

Overjoyed at this opportunity of escape, I rushed upstairs, and folding my clothes with more than usual care upon the stool by my pillow, I slipped gently into bed.

I had much feared that the struggles of Mordaunt on the wooden floor of the passage which led to the private staircase might disturb the slumbers of the head master. I was not mistaken, for a few minutes afterwards the captain and Thornton entered the room, accompanied not only by the doctor, but by Mrs. Wentworth herself, in a *toilette de circonstance*.

"You say you saw four?" said the head master to the captain.

"I think so, sir, but I won't be positive."

"At all events, two are secured."

"Three, sir; I had one and Thornton two."

"Then one of Mr. Thornton's has escaped," said Mrs. Wentworth. "I suppose that he can identify him again?"

"I am afraid not, ma'am, for it was pitch dark when he broke from me."

"Perhaps I can assist your memory," rejoined she, walking straight up to my bed. "I should not be surprised if he were to be found in this direction."

"Very likely," said Thornton. "Why, here are Rockingham's clothes, which appear to be in a rather disorderly state."

"I can't say that that strikes me at all," interposed the head master.

But Mrs. Wentworth had slightly raised my bed-clothes, and laid her hand upon my shoulder.

"I can literally hear," said she, "the beating of his heart, and his arm is as cold as ice."

"He may have been sleeping upon it," resumed the doctor. "I really cannot believe that Rockingham has been engaged in such a business."

"And I have very little doubt of it," replied his wife.

"Perhaps, then, ma'am," said Thornton, "Rockingham had better get up, and stay with the two others, at least until we can find some more suspicious symptoms elsewhere."

"I think so, most decidedly," answered Mrs. Wentworth.

I slowly rose and dressed myself, in sad despair at my detection, and still more at the apparent desertion of my friend.

The search was continued, and the appearance of every boy, as he lay in bed, carefully scrutinized, but no further indication could be discovered.

"You think that they came only from this room and from yours?" said the doctor to Thornton.

"I do, sir," answered the latter. "I was first aroused by footsteps moving at the door of our room; I got up, and finding two boys missing, I went out on the staircase, and observed that the door of the captain's room was half open. This induced me to wake him up, and our search soon led us into the garden."

"Still, the missing boy may have come from another room," said the doctor.

Just then, Mrs. Wentworth, who was a little before us, exclaimed, "Look here. Here is a boy in bed with his waistcoat on, and his hands properly stained too."

"That will do, I think," resumed the doctor. And our luckless companion, whose guilt was now fully written upon his countenance, was ordered to get up and join us.

"We have them all now," exclaimed the captain, "and one over, perhaps; what shall we do with them, sir?"

"Lock them up in the schoolroom till to-morrow morning," answered the head master, and then we will see how we are to dispose of the case, which appears to be a very serious one. Now, good night to you both."

For the rest of that long dismal night, I remained in the cold schoolroom, with my three associates. While two of these discussed anxiously with me the probable penalty in store for us, Mordaunt's gloomy silence was broken by one single observation, computing the number of young fruit-trees which he trusted that he had destroyed.

CHAPTER VII.

When the whole host of Hatred stood hard by
To watch and mock thee shrinking, thou hast smiled
With that sedate and all-enduring eye.—BYRON.

At last the gloomy daylight struggled through the high windows of our prison, but it brought no consolation with it. When seven o'clock struck, and as our companions were entering the schoolroom, we were summoned to the head master's private study. We found him there in close conversation with Mrs. Wentworth and Thornton. We were commanded to stand apart, but we were not so far off as to prevent my overhearing the principal observations which fell from each. Mrs. Wentworth was addressing her husband as we entered.

"I wish I could at least persuade Mr. Thornton," said she, "to speak openly, and not to insinuate. Does he think, or not, that the boys have any grievance to urge, which is an excuse for such conduct?"

"If you wish me to speak quite frankly," replied Thornton, "I think, madam, that nothing can possibly excuse the proceedings of last night; but I also believe that nothing of the kind would ever

have been contemplated if the boys did not conceive themselves in some way aggrieved."

"The question is not whether they think themselves aggrieved," retorted Mrs. Wentworth, impatiently, "but whether they really have any just cause of complaint. I wish you would say at once whether you think they have or have not."

"Well, madam, as you wish me to say what I think, I believe that a little less severity shown to the younger boys might tend better to insure the object we all have in view. Eight boys were reported on Sunday to the head master; that certainly is an unusual number."

"And pray what does that prove, except that on Sunday the appearance and behaviour of the boys were worse than on any previous occasion? As far as I am concerned, I reported none that did not most fully deserve it, and I stated distinctly my motives; it rested with Dr. Wentworth to punish them or not, as he thought fit."

I here remarked that the head master interposed, but I could not gather the substance of what he said.

"Oh, of course I am in the wrong," resumed Mrs. Wentworth, in a more audible voice. "All this only shows how right I was, when I determined at first to have nothing to do whatsoever with the school; it really is not my province, and I have said so a hundred times."

"Come, come, my dear Isabella," said the doctor, "no one has intended to cast any reflection upon you. You well know my reasons for wishing to have your assistance, which is most invaluable to me: the school has never thriven so well before, and I am sure that more than half of the last pupils were sent here by their mothers in consequence of the care and attention which you are known to bestow upon the boys."

"Very well, then, if I am to interfere, which is by your order, and not by my wish, I am determined not to be made a laughing-stock of, as I was at first."

Thornton here added a few words, which appeared to me to be in accordance with the opinion expressed just before by the head master; and Dr. Wentworth, having made a sign to mark that we might possibly overhear the conversation, if it were prolonged, commanded us to approach.

"You, Mordaunt," said he, "seem to me to have been the leader in this nefarious business."

"I was, sir."

"And these boys were with you?"

"I would rather not say, sir."

"Well, we will come to that presently. What may have been your motives?"

"I wished clearly to show, sir, a strong sense of the unfair treatment I have met with. I have been here more than three years, always doing my duty to the utmost of my power, and I did not deserve the unjust punishment I received yesterday."

"The punishment was fully merited," replied the head master;

"but still I should have remitted it, had it been your first fault."

"When I was reported before," said Mordaunt, "which is now more than two years ago, I did not deserve it more than I did on Sunday; and that the writing-master has fully admitted since."

"These are details," returned Dr. Wentworth, "into which I cannot enter now. Your present offence you do not pretend to deny; it is one of open rebellion, and you must prepare to leave the school immediately."

The same doom was passed upon my two other luckless companions. I was awaiting the fatal moment when it would also be pronounced upon me, but the captain, who, after having ushered us in, had found means to exchange a few words with Thornton, came forward and said:—

"I am afraid, sir, that your suspicions have fallen upon Rockingham principally under the impression that I had distinctly beheld a fourth boy in the garden. Now I have already said, and must repeat, that I cannot at all answer for having seen more than three."

"Well, what is to be done?" said the doctor. "Mrs. Wentworth certainly thought Rockingham's appearance very suspicious last night."

"I did," replied she, "but I do not wish any decision to be come to upon my opinion only. I am aware," continued she glancing at Thornton, "that I am reckoned to have shown some severity to this boy; God knows how anxious I was, on the contrary, to treat him with every kindness, until bad advice and bad example had led him astray. I shall say nothing one way or another with respect to him."

"The best plan," said the doctor, "would be to interrogate him, and see what account he can give of himself."

"Would that be according to the principles of the British Constitution?" said Thornton, with a smile, and guessing that the head master was not very anxious to press the matter much farther.

"Well, not exactly, perhaps. Look here, Thornton: you have some influence over the boy. I leave the matter in your hands, and you can deal with it as you think best."

I was happy, indeed, to retire with my friend, and could scarcely bring myself to believe that the impending fate had been averted.

"You must be mad, absolutely mad," said Thornton to me, when we were alone in the passage, "to have run your head into such a noose. Do you know you owe me some credit for having pulled you through. Had I appeared to side with you at first, you would infallibly have been convicted, were it only through Mrs. Wentworth's spirit of contradiction. Now, for God's sake, do be more careful, for you have already really deserved to be expelled."

I thanked Thornton from the bottom of my heart, for the protection he had again afforded me, and vowed most earnestly and *most sincerely* to avoid any similar offence.

In the afternoon it was rumoured in the school that Mordaunt's

two companions in misfortune were to be withdrawn by their parents, who lived in the immediate neighbourhood; but that he himself had applied for the commutation, which they had declined to do. Not understanding this last expression, I made several inquiries with respect to its bearing, and ascertained from my companions the following particulars.

When the school at Ashton had been originally founded, one of the standing laws then framed had decreed, that any boy guilty of an act of rebellion, or whose name should be reported to the head master for ill conduct three times in one week, should be expelled. The severity of this rule was, at first, not unintentional, as, by its application, not only a very strict discipline was maintained, but several vacancies were from time to time created. When, however, the practice of receiving pupils was introduced, though it was impossible not still to administer equal justice to all the boys, it was found inconvenient to adhere to this regulation, the consequences of which might expose the school to serious pecuniary sacrifices.

Thus several pupils having been dismissed within one year, a meeting of the guardians was called. It was there determined, that though no power absolutely existed to annul the original rule, it might still be partially modified in practice, and it was finally agreed that any boy, between the age of nine and thirteen, who should be sentenced to be expelled, might, upon a written application from himself, and with the specific consent of his parents, be re-admitted into the school, after the infliction of a punishment far more rigorous than the ordinary flogging.

The guardians being principally officers had, in drawing up this modified article, defined and provided for with great minuteness, the details and circumstances of this punishment, in imitation of the rules laid down on similar occasions in the two services. They had, however, decided that the utmost amount of lashes to which any boy could be thus subjected, was eight for the under school, and fourteen for the upper. It was upon these terms that Mordaunt had applied for permission to remain on at Ashton; and as his former conduct had been remarkably orderly and regular, his request was acceded to.

On the following morning, we were first apprised of the forthcoming ceremony, by the entrance of a bluff-visaged personage, whom we knew to be Mrs. Wentworth's brother, and the surgeon of the village. Soon afterwards we were desired to leave our seats and to stand in a circle round the small platform opposite the fireplace. The captain and the monitor for the day were then despatched for the culprit, and Mordaunt was introduced, rather paler than usual, but having in no way lost his habitual look of dogged resolution. He was told to approach Dr. Wentworth, who was standing by his desk, where a monitor was placed to draw up a minute of the proceedings, which was always kept.

"You have applied, sir," said the head master, "to receive the punishment provided for in the 10th modified article of the rules?"

"I have, sir."

"This is your letter?"

"It is, sir."

"You persist in this wish?"

"I do, sir."

"And you still affirm that you have no relations at all in England?"

"Yes, sir."

Here some difficulty appeared to occur, and several observations were exchanged between Dr. Wentworth, his brother-in-law, and the under-master. The last question was then again addressed to the culprit, who answered still with the same firmness and precision, that his aunt, who had obtained his admission, had died the year before, and that the only other relative he had ever heard of was an uncle, then serving in India. Mordaunt's replies having been read over to him by the monitor, and signed by himself, orders were given by the head master to proceed.

In the centre of the ring formed by the whole school, Dr. Wentworth stationed himself with two masters and two of the monitors, while the surgeon as well as the under-master, whose duty it was on these occasions to inflict the punishment, ascended the small platform. Thither Mordaunt was conducted by the two monitors who still accompanied him. By their direction he took off his coat and waistcoat, bared his shoulders to the waist, and gave up his hands, which were bound with a rope firmly secured to an iron hook fixed for that purpose in the wall. A horsewhip was then handed to the under-master, who slowly and with some force applied on the bare shoulders before him the prescribed number of strokes.

During the first seven lashes, Mordaunt evinced no other symptoms of the acute pain which he was undergoing, than the shudder which ran through his whole frame at each blow. A pause of two minutes was then allowed, and he was offered a glass of water, which he declined. When the punishment was resumed, either the sufferings were greater from their repetition, or the strength of our schoolfellow was failing, for we distinctly heard a deep moan follow each lash, and his arms being finally released, he slipped from the hands of the monitors to the ground.

In a moment, however, he recovered his firmness, and arose. As I was standing close by, I heard one of the monitors whisper to him, that if he would go to Mrs. Wentworth, she would apply something to his shoulders.

"I want no assistance from her," answered Mordaunt savagely; and as he drew his coarse cotton shirt over him, I distinctly saw the slight bloody lines with which it was immediately marked.

Every circumstance of this punishment had been evidently combined so as to impart the greatest amount of awe to the youthful beholders, and in this respect it certainly was generally successful. I could observe that very few of my companions remained unmoved, and I myself may still say, after the many perils and trials to *which I have since been subjected, that I have seldom witnessed a sight which more deeply affected me.*

Late in the afternoon, Mordaunt was restored to the playground. I approached him with a feeling amounting almost to reverence, and testified my deep admiration at the extraordinary firmness which he had displayed: his only answer was to express his happiness that I had succeeded in escaping a similar fate. Observing that he was still more taciturn than usual, I soon left him and wandered alone to the low wall which separated the playground from the road. There the shades of evening were closing around me when I saw Mrs. Wentworth driving up in her ponychaise on her return home. Scarcely had she gone by when a heavy stone, thrown with great force from behind me, flew close by my head, and passing within a very few inches of her face, lit on the other side of the road. I turned round immediately and saw a boy, whom I easily recognised, concealing himself behind the low wall a few yards from me.

"Good God! Mordaunt," said I, "is it possible that you threw that stone?"

"I am afraid I missed her," answered he coolly: "I should have hit her if my arm had not been so stiff."

My blood ran cold at the savage and determined vindictiveness of my companion, and though I resolved in no way to betray him, I felt that no further sympathy could exist between us.

Mrs. Wentworth had not failed to observe the stone, and of course to report the circumstance to her husband; the monitors were accordingly closely interrogated; but as no one but myself had witnessed the occurrence, they could throw no light upon the matter. Never had I seen Dr. Wentworth so deeply irritated as when he denounced that evening to the indignation of the school the unknown miscreant who could have been guilty of such an act. At that moment my eyes involuntarily strayed in the direction of Mordaunt, and I could not but admire the extraordinary self-possession with which he was recopying his Latin verses. How little I then thought that within twenty-four hours I should myself, according to all human evidence, have been found guilty of a similar offence!

I had before this event remarked, that among the favourite pastimes of the younger gentlemen, none was more generally popular than that of throwing stones; the more so perhaps, that the practice was strictly forbidden. I myself very seldom indulged in this pursuit, less I dare say than any other boy of my age. However, on the morning of the ill-starred day which followed that upon which Mordaunt had attempted the desperate act of revenge I had witnessed, just as I was leaving the playground, and prompted by I know not what evil spirit, I could not resist throwing a large pebble that I was holding at a swallow which was soaring at some height above me. Scarcely had the stone left my hand, when again Mrs. Wentworth's phaeton, driven by herself at a rapid pace, turned the corner of the road at the lower end of the playground. In breathless suspense, I watched the progress of my missile while it seemed fatally attracted towards the fair hand upon which it finally fell with some force. I heard a loud

scream of pain and terror—the reins fell from Mrs. Wentworth's hold—the horses started, and the vehicle flew swiftly by, not, however, before the eyes of the affrighted schoolmistress had met mine.

Hardly less horror-stricken than herself, I remained for a moment nailed to the spot upon which I was standing. I was aroused by the voice of the monitor, unfortunately the very one whom I knew to be most devoted to Mrs. Wentworth.

"Upon my word, that is tolerably cool," said he; "at all events the doctor will now know who throws stones at his wife."

"I assure you," exclaimed I in an agony of despair, "that I could have no such intention. I threw the stone at a swallow."

"Well then you made a pretty good miss of it. Come in now, and another time do not trust too much to my back being turned."

I entered the school plunged in the deepest gloom; soon afterwards the monitor was summoned by Mrs. Wentworth, but for the present I heard nothing more with respect to my fate. Happily no question was addressed to me in class that day, for I certainly could have made no intelligible answer. When we returned to the playground, I was duly informed by the monitor that I must expect another flogging on the following morning, and perhaps to be expelled afterwards.

In the full paroxysm of my despair I rushed in search of Thornton. I found him in the very corner where the fatal occurrence had taken place, engaged in deep conversation with the captain, apparently explaining to him, by lines drawn in the gravel, some complicated problem in geometry. Both listened with the greatest attention to my story, and when I had concluded it, remained silent for a moment.

"It is a bad business enough, Thornton," said the captain.

"Indeed it is; every circumstance and every appearance are against him. What can be done?"

"I suppose we had better first see what Talbot says," replied the captain. "He is monitor, is he not?"

Answering in the affirmative I followed them, and we soon found Talbot. He stated that he had seen me, according to his deliberate opinion, throw the stone designedly at Mrs. Wentworth; that I had much hurt her, besides exposing her to being run away with by her ponies, which had, at a most critical moment, been fortunately stopped by a countryman; that he had consequently reported me to the head master, and that there the matter must rest as far as he was concerned.

I had already observed that this monitor was not on very good terms either with Thornton or with the captain; I was, therefore, not very much surprised to see that nothing they said could induce him to alter his views of the case.

"You can see the doctor if you choose," said he, at last. "As to me, my report is made, and I can now retract nothing."

"Look here," suddenly cried the captain: "I verily believe she is herself coming down the road outside."

"She is indeed," said Thornton, "and we must see what can be

done in that quarter. We are neither of us great favourites, but I think she will listen to you sooner than to me."

"I have no objection to try," answered the good-natured captain. "Come along with me, Rockingham," and we both sprang over the low wall which separated the playground from the road. When we met Mrs. Wentworth, who was walking with a young lady of the neighbourhood, one of her greatest friends and allies, we both took off our caps, and the captain, in the most respectful and insinuating voice he could command, proceeded to state my case. He was, however, soon interrupted by the question, whether he was present at the time.

He was obliged to own that he was not.

"Well, then," said Mrs. Wentworth, "I suppose the doctor will abide by the report of the monitor who saw the occurrence with his own eyes."

"But surely, madam," rejoined the captain, "you cannot think that Rockingham, who is a well-behaved, good-tempered boy, could really have intended throwing the stone at you?"

"I myself say nothing," answered she. "It is for the doctor to decide whether he thinks it right or not that my life should continually be thus put in peril by your schoolfellows. What do you think, Emily?"

"Why I consider that you are very much too forbearing in the matter. If I were you, I should insist upon their being most severely punished. Cowardly little ruffians, to throw stones at ladies."

"Ah, indeed," replied Mrs. Wentworth. "Do you know that they may hit you some day and spoil your beauty. At all events, you see that I am not afraid," continued she, addressing the captain; "for here I am again, quite within shot, as my soldier-brother would say. I have no doubt that you and your friend Mr. Thornton think very lightly of the matter, though, God knows, I had a very narrow escape yesterday; and as to this day's stone, you have no idea of the pain I feel when I move my hand." As she said this, with her softest voice and most languishing smile, she proceeded to take off her glove. When I saw the large blue mark, which was plainly perceptible on the slender white hand that I loved so much, even when it was raised against me, my heart smote me strangely, and I burst into tears.

Did Mrs. Wentworth again mistake my motive? or was she determined to impart greater pain to her disowned favourite than could be inflicted by any punishment which the rules of the school had devised?

"There is no use his coming crying to me," continued she to the captain. "When the doctor returns, your schoolfellow can try how far his entreaties may avail in that quarter; as to me, I am determined not to interfere one way or another."

"And as for me, I should take care he got something to cry about," added Miss Emily, fixing her dark eyes upon me with a look of sovereign contempt.

I felt the whole pride of my race burning within me at these taunts. "I shall not ask for, and I want no forgiveness,"

cried I; "all I wish is, that you would not have such an opinion of me."

"I form my opinion of the boys from their conduct, and not from their professions," answered Mrs. Wentworth coldly; and smiling again most graciously upon the captain, she moved on with her friend.

I requested the good-hearted captain to interfere no more on my behalf, and, after a sleepless night, was summoned the next morning, alone, to Dr. Wentworth's desk.

"If I could think," said he to me sternly, "that you had thrown that stone designedly, you should not stay another hour here; and, let me advise you, unless you are bent upon being expelled, to be very careful henceforth of your conduct."

With this admonition, and a very severe flogging, I was dismissed.

"Now, for Heaven's sake," said Thornton, when we met, "be particularly careful until the end of this week; to-day is only Wednesday—and should you be reported once more before Sunday, all will be over."

CHAPTER VIII.

Terrors are turned upon me: they pursue my soul as the wind: and my welfare passeth away as a cloud.—JOB.

How deeply I vowed never for an instant to lose sight of Thornton's last and most impressive advice; but alas! what are our vows when our fate is at hand. On that day, and on the following, no fresh incident occurred, but on the last day of that ill-starred week, the cup of my adversity overflowed.

A large number of the poorer boys belonging to the neighbourhood were wont to proceed every Saturday afternoon to the house of the rector, to receive religious instruction, which he administered on these occasions to all who would attend. On their return, these boys generally passed in a body on the road adjoining the playground, and seldom failed to address some expressions of defiance or of derision to their youthful cotemporaries confined within the narrow limits of our school.

These taunts were habitually very freely responded to, and hence a practice had arisen of exchanging, not only sundry critical observations, but stones, brickbats, and other missiles, and also of entering, across the low wall, into still closer contest. A serious accident having one day thus occurred to one of the assailants, the strictest orders had been given by the head master to abstain entirely from any similar conflict, and the severest penalty threatened to whomsoever should disregard this injunction.

On this fatal Saturday, the village boys were more numerous and *more aggressive* than ever, and loud was their shout of exultation *when, at their approach*, and under a volley of stones, we were *recalled by the monitors* from the adjacent portion of the play-

ground. Such indeed were the triumphant feelings of the enemy, that several of their leaders sprang over the low wall, and actually dared us to battle on our own ground.

"I can't stand this," said Mordaunt, who was unwillingly retreating under the very eye of a monitor; and rushing forward, he was soon engaged with several of the aggressors.

I watched him for a moment, fighting with his usual desperate spirit; but when I saw him nearly overpowered by the fearful odds against him, the misfortunes of the week, Thornton's advice, Dr. Wentworth's warning, all were forgotten, and I ran forward, not alone, to the rescue. Soon after, we were joined by the monitors and the under-masters, and the enemy in their turn retired.

I was still under the full excitement of the fight, and almost blinded by the blows I had received, when I was recalled to the consciousness of my situation, by the harsh voice of the under master, informing me that he would send my name up to the doctor.

I had from the first hated this man, and since I had been in his class that feeling had not improved; the less so, that I conceived, whether fairly or not I do not to this day know, that he was leagued with Mrs. Wentworth against me.

"I do not see why you should single me out," said I, fiercely, to him.

"I have no account, sir, to give to you," answered he. "I saw you deeply engaged in the fight, and I shall do my duty in reporting you to the doctor."

"And to the doctor's wife, too?" inquired I, not in a very respectful manner.

I suppose the slight taunt I certainly intended to convey, struck upon some very sensitive chord, for the under master turned paler than usual, with anger, as he desired me, on my peril, to make no further impertinent remarks to him.

As soon as Dr. Wentworth entered the schoolroom on that evening, the second master went up to his desk, and I well saw, by the vindictive expression of my denouncer's countenance, that he was placing my imprudent conduct in the most unfavourable light. I was immediately afterwards summoned by the doctor, and informed that I should be flogged on the Monday morning, and then, according to the standing rules, expelled, as having been reported for serious misconduct three times in one week. In the meanwhile, as I had virtually ceased to form part of the school, I was to remain in close confinement, away from the other boys; and I was accordingly conducted by the monitor to the small single-bedded room, where I slept on the first night of my arrival.

What were my feelings when I again found myself there alone! How bitterly I mourned over the sad change in my destiny, since that first night, when the spirit of Mrs. Wentworth had seemed to watch over my pillow, and to guard me from the forthcoming trials of my new life! During the long and dreary evening I was left there in total darkness, and my sad reflections were but for one moment interrupted by the entrance of the housemaid, who

had been desired to bring me a large piece of dry bread, and to order me to go to bed immediately. Wearied with my hopeless meditations, I followed this injunction, and soon sleep, folding me in her arms, dispelled for a time the agony of my boyish despair.

Towards the middle of the night I was startled and aroused by a slight noise in my room.

"It is I, Rockingham," said a deep and well-known voice. "I was obliged to choose this hour, as the doctor would not hear of my coming to you yesterday. What is to be done now?"

"Done, Thornton!" answered I. "I have, thank God, but one day more to pass in this abode of tyranny and injustice, and then I shall be at home again."

"It can scarcely end so," said my companion, sadly. "You are aware, of course, that your father is going abroad again, and that the establishment at Elmswater is entirely broken up?"

"How have you heard that?" replied I.

"Oh, I know all about you and your family, and I will tell you how, some day."

"Then you are aware that I was for a long time with Mr. Williams, the rector of our parish, to whom I shall go again now."

"He will hardly take you in from here, my poor Rockingham, without your father's commands."

"Indeed! but then, there is my aunt——"

"Oh, of course, the good-natured and amiable Lady Sheerness. I suppose that you expect a great deal of kind assistance from her in your present troubles!"

"Perhaps not much of that; but I should think that she would not allow her nephew to wander on the high road."

"Not exactly; but you know there is an alternative."

"An alternative!" shrieked I. "To be tied up like Mordaunt, before the whole school, under the lash of that detested under-master? No; I have borne long enough with their oppression, and will be their victim no more."

"My dear fellow," said Thornton, "I am truly grieved for you; but still, we must not make matters worse than they are. I think, and firmly hope, that the day will come when these severe punishments, now almost exclusively resorted to, may be condemned by the wiser judgment of those to whom the education of children will be confided. At present, however, backed by the authority of Solomon and by the example of their forerunners, our parents and guardians conceive that they are acting up to their duty and for our best interests in allowing us to be subjected to these inflictions. They are thus so universally resorted to as not to bear with them any real and lasting disgrace. It is not so if we are expelled; then, indeed, a stigma, which often adheres through life to our name, is fastened upon us. What is the utmost pain that we can endure for a quarter of an hour compared to the lasting regret of having forfeited so early our good repute? I believe *that, in your case, if the commutation is applied for, it will be granted.*"

"But I certainly will not demand it," interrupted I. "I will

not give my enemies this new satisfaction ; and say what you will, it is a disgrace to which I far prefer anything else that can happen."

"A disgrace!" repeated Thornton, in his low, melancholy voice. "Rockingham, I watched your countenance attentively when your eyes were fixed upon Mordaunt on Monday last. Did you consider him to be disgraced because untoward circumstances had placed him in the very position to which you are now reduced? Was it contempt you felt for him when the utmost pain that the malignity or vindictiveness of man could inflict fell far short of his boyish courage? If such were the feelings with which you were then beholding him, I read very imperfectly in your looks."

"No, indeed," answered I; "there was no contempt for Mordaunt in my thoughts. Never since I have been here did I feel greater admiration for any one, saving for you, than I did for him in that hour."

"What you admired then, Rockingham, was the highest and the noblest attribute of man—resolution: of this, Mordaunt has an unusual share; whether for good or for evil, his future life will show. You are by nature more diffident, more sensitive, more intellectually gifted than he is; but still, when the blood of the Rockinghams is aroused within you, I am much mistaken if you are inferior to him in real fortitude. I will press the matter no further upon you now, in your present excited state, but I trust that you will seriously reflect upon the advice I here give you, on no account to leave Ashton at present, as far as it may depend upon you. I much fear that you were born under an evil star; still, remember that we are not without some influence over our own destinies, and that this moment is one of those upon which much of the future may depend."

He left me, but for the first time since our friendship had begun, he had failed to persuade me. I was determined not to submit to the ignominious alternative which Mordaunt had been forced to accept, and having early on the next morning obtained, by my entreaties to the housemaid, a pen and a sheet of paper, I wrote a long letter to Lady Sheerness, describing my forlorn situation, and beseeching her to let me go to her until I could join some other school.

That day being Sunday, I was ordered to go to church as usual with the boys. When Mrs. Wentworth approached me, I fancied that I could trace an expression of sadness overlouding her countenance as she gazed for an instant on my pale face and dejected appearance; but she passed me in silence, and I saw and felt no distinct evidence that her late sentiments towards me were altered.

During the service, the pupils and the foundation sat apart, separated by a narrow passage dividing into equal portions the aisle of the church occupied by the school. I was therefore much surprised when, in the course of the sermon, I heard at my ear the voice of Mordaunt, who had managed to creep unperceived to the bench behind the one upon which I was sitting.

"Rockingham," said he, "I don't know if you will choose the commutation, but should you do so, you will find it rougher work than you are accustomed to. I have read somewhere that sailors will put a bullet in their mouths to deaden the pain, and I have managed to get you one; as I have no money I have given my knife for it: here it is."

Much touched by this simple mark of my schoolfellow's remembrance, I pressed his hand in silence. I afterwards learned that the poor fellow had been detected by one of the masters, as he was gliding cautiously back to his own place, and that he had been severely punished next day for improper conduct at church.

In the course of the afternoon, Thornton, who had this time obtained leave to visit me, returned to my solitary room. I immediately told him that I had written to my aunt, and that I now trusted my enemies would have but one opportunity more of rejoicing in my sufferings.

"I must tell you," said my friend, scarcely able to suppress a smile at my earnest manner and language, "that you would not judge Mrs. Wentworth fairly if you reckoned her this time among those whom you call your enemies. I have just been nearly half an hour with her; she is really sorry for you now, and I scarcely know which she will regret the most of the two alternatives between which you must decide. It is most unfortunate that one of the foundation should so lately have been placed in the same situation as yourself: equal justice to them and to the pupils is, as you know, the fundamental rule of the school, and Dr. Wentworth is determined to abide by it. I trust however, that I have succeeded in getting to-morrow morning's flogging adjourned, if not remitted altogether."

"I do not know how to thank you for all your kindness to me," said I, much moved at his untiring exertions on my behalf.

"And yet," replied he, "you would leave Ashton while I am still here, not only without regret, but by your own positive will?"

I raised my eyes; but no sooner were they fixed upon the beaming countenance of my protector, than, for the first time in all my recent distress, my heart failed me, and I burst into tears.

"No," said I, "not without regret, Thornton, I never can forget your kindness to me, I never can cease to love and respect you; but I trust that we shall meet again elsewhere."

"It is ever dangerous for friends to part," said he musingly: "in the wild and trackless world which is open before us, we can scarcely hope that our wandering paths will often cross. If you really have some affection for me, if you think that my society and advice may be of some future benefit to you, you will not leave Ashton so long as I am here."

There was something in the voice and manner of Thornton which was peculiarly impressive, and which seldom failed to move me. "I am sorry, now," muttered I, "that I have written to my aunt."

"Well, it can't be helped," answered he. "You will remember,

am sure, when we are parted, that I did my utmost for your happiness here. You never heard, I dare say, of Sir Charles Thornton, my father, but Lord Arlingford knows him well, and has shown him, in former times, kindness which every Thornton will ever be happy in requiting to the utmost of his power."

During the four following days nothing occurred which could relieve the wearisome monotony of my confinement. On the fifth, while I was still in bed, though the morning bell for the general school had long since rung, I was aroused from my melancholy reflections upon the wisdom of Thornton's advice by a gentle step at my very side. I raised my head, and, to my no small surprise, beheld Mrs. Wentworth herself.

"How late you are, Rockingham," said she, coldly, but not harshly. Are you not well?"

"Oh, yes, ma'am, thank you!" answered I; "but I find the day so very long here."

"I suppose so," resumed she; "but this, at all events, need not last much more. You have written, I believe, to your aunt, Lady Sheerness?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Well, here is her answer: you had better read it at once."

The reply was to the following effect:—

"My dear Edward,

"I have received your letter, as well as one from Dr. Wentworth. I am very sorry indeed to learn that you have been led by your wayward and ungovernable disposition into such serious difficulties; but still I am happy to find that it is not absolutely necessary that you should leave Ashton at present. Your head master informs me that, by the rules of the school, some other punishment may be substituted for that which you have incurred; and I see, by his letter, that every precaution has been taken to prevent any undue severity from being exercised on similar occasions. I must, therefore, recommend you to submit to this punishment, which I fear you have fully deserved; for, as to your leaving Ashton voluntarily at this moment, it is perfectly out of the question. I have just let my house in town, and am starting for a tour in Scotland; I, therefore, cannot receive you, nor do I see to whom amongst our friends I could apply at present. And now farewell, and let me soon hear a better account of you, or your father will be seriously annoyed when he returns to England.

"Your affectionate aunt,

"Cavendish Square,
"Tuesday morning."

"MARIA SHEERNES."

"Rockingham," continued Mrs. Wentworth, when I had read all, "I see that you are mortified and disappointed at this communication. You had yet to learn, I suppose, that you will find very few who will encourage and uphold you in your present unruly disposition."

Wounded to the heart already by Lady Sheerness's letter, I here burst into tears.

"Far be it from me," resumed Mrs. Wentworth, in a kindlier tone, "to add in any way to your present distress. I believe I am one of those whom you foolishly reckon as your enemies. You are little aware of the efforts I have used within the last few days that you might be spared this extremity of disgrace and suffering; but Dr. Wentworth is inexorable, and the regulations of the school, which have lately been so relentlessly applied to one of the foundation, would, indeed, by no means justify an exception in your case. Besides, your aunt, with whom I am slightly acquainted, has written to me to urge that you should be strictly dealt with, according to your deserts. Will you, for once again, be guided by my advice?"

"Oh, yes, ma'am; certainly."

"Then make up your mind firmly, like one who will some day be a man, to bear what unfortunately is now inevitable, and we will all do our best for you in this emergency, as far as justice and the rules of the school will admit. You have pen and ink there; shall I send you a sheet of paper?"

"Yes ma'am; and I will write to the doctor, as you recommend."

When, early on the next morning, I was summoned to the schoolroom, I found the boys marshalled there in the same array as on a former occasion. Notwithstanding the assurance which I had given to the captain, I felt my heart sink grievously within me at the thought that I was to be this time the object and the victim of the solemnity which I had witnessed with so much emotion when merely a spectator. As far, however, as I could analyze my feelings, I was most moved by the dread of not being equal to the untried emergency which was at hand. Such have I been through life, ever more anxious to act with credit my part before men, than to insure to myself any substantial gratification, or to avert any sufferings which I could honourably or silently endure.

In answering the questions of the head master, I endeavoured to emulate the simple tone and tenour of Mordaunt's replies; but, alas! when called upon to sign the record of my voluntary submission, I saw, with unavailing regret, the pen quivering in my hand. It was, however, but a transient symptom, one pang of momentary apprehension evinced by the mind for its more earthly and frailer associate. When the moment for actual endurance arrived, when my arms were bound, when the vindictive lash fell with full force upon my naked shoulders, I felt that the appointed time was come in which all the latent energies of my nature were to be put to the test; and the untamed spirit soared high above the dreaded ordeal.

Half the punishment had been inflicted, the accustomed pause had ensued, and I heard Thornton, who was acting as monitor, and was standing close to me on the platform, whisper in my ear:—

"That is splendidly borne, Rockingham; three or four minutes more and all will be over."

But this short suspense had on me, as on Mordaunt, the effect of relaxing the nerves, and of disarming the fortitude of the will. What to others might have been a welcome and grateful release

from pain, was to me, as well as to him, a new and greater trial. When the punishment was resumed, in vain had I recourse to his specific; the unbidden groan escaped from my lips at each stroke, and so violent were the heavings of my whole frame, that the bullet slipped from my clenched teeth, and glided down into my throat.

As soon as I was released I fell on the floor; but not to arise at once, like Mordaunt. A strange feeling of suffocation oppressed me, and I became for a moment almost insensible; then a low murmur arose around me, above which I distinctly heard the voice of the captain.

"Doctor," said he, "what can be the matter with the boy? See how his eyes roll, and how black he is in the face!"

I could mark the look of anxiety with which the surgeon was bending over me, but as I was unable to speak, my hand instinctively grasped my throat.

"Surely the boy must have swallowed something," said he, and raising me up, he struck me with some force between the shoulders.

"It is all right now, sir," said I, when I found my teeth again clenching the bullet.

"Why, if I was still on board a man-of-war," exclaimed the surgeon, who had served for a long time in the navy, "I should think that you had swallowed a bullet."

"Perhaps I did, sir," replied I, and rising with his help, I proceeded to readjust my dress.

"Well, you have given us a grand fright," whispered Thornton. "Now come along to Mrs. Wentworth, who desired me particularly to take you to her."

"Tell her, that I am very much obliged to her, but that I want no assistance."

I returned to my accustomed seat, and though weakened by the shock, and the sufferings I had undergone, I felt so elated at having with tolerable success traversed all my trials, that I was almost happy gain.

During the dinner-time on that day I beheld the eyes of Mrs. Wentworth once more fixed upon me. It was not quite her former look of tender affection, yet there was something in it of sympathy and of compassion which almost recalled more fortunate times. I could see that she whispered a word to Dr. Wentworth, who also looked for a moment at me, and seemed to incline his head in token of assent. As soon as the boys arose, she called me to her, and when we were alone together, she said:—

"Rockingham, you are very pale; do you feel quite well?"

"Yes ma'am, thank you," replied I.

"Are you quite sure? Why did you not come to me when I sent for you this morning?"

"Because, ma'am, I did not wish to give you any trouble about me."

"Was that your reason?" said she, with something of her former smile.

"It was one of my reasons, ma'am."

"Well, I must not inquire about the others. Now explain to me how you came to give so much alarm to everybody?"

"It was only a bullet which I had swallowed, ma'am, and which remained for a moment in my throat."

"And what on earth were you doing with a bullet in your mouth?"

"I had been told, ma'am, that if I pressed it hard between my teeth, the pain would be deadened."

"Silly child! Never be so foolish again. Now look here, Rockingham," continued she, "I never can now feel for you as I did at first: that of course is out of the question. Still, you have been particularly recommended to me by your aunt, and I should be sorry to see you go to the bad entirely. You have had much to endure since you neglected my advice, and turned your back upon me. I trust you are now alive to the consequences which all misconduct must have in this place. Be better and wiser too henceforth, and remember that your family, far from desiring to withdraw you from here, wishes you, whensoever you deserve it, to be punished according to the utmost rigour of the rules."

My heart had flown to Mrs. Wentworth at the symptoms of returning kindness which her former words had evinced; but my pride rose again within me at what I conceived to be this new mark of my aunt's unkindness, and I coldly answered that I asked for no exemption from any of the regulations of the school. Still one look or one expression more of affection, or of interest from Mrs. Wentworth, would have recalled me to all my previous love and allegiance; but, ere she could add another word, she was summoned away by a pressing message from her husband.

CHAPTER IX.

With all thy gettings, get Understanding. Exalt her, and she will promote thee.—PROVERBS.

I HAD now reached the climax of my adversity at Ashton, and I felt a secret conviction that less inauspicious days were at hand. I could not but acknowledge the full truth of Mrs. Wentworth's observations, that I had nothing to look to beyond the precincts of the school, and I endeavoured to submit to its rules and its duties with resignation, and even with cheerfulness. The honest emulation and pride with which I had at first laboured to distinguish myself among all by my irreproachable conduct were gone; but if, in this respect, I had lost the consciousness of a more exalted situation, I also knew that I had been subjected, in their utmost rigour, to all the punishments which could be inflicted upon me; *and judging by experience how far they fell short of my power of endurance, I contemplated, without apprehension, the possibility of their recurrence.*

Thus, a greater feeling of self-possession and of self reliance than

I had as yet known, replaced in my mind all the loftier aspirations of those triumphant hours which had preceded my fall, and I followed up the studies of my class with less zeal, but perhaps with more steadiness, and more efficiency than at first. It was not so with Mordaunt. An unquenched sentiment of revenge for the injustice with which he considered himself to have been treated still burned in his heart; a sullen and desperate resolution of more than boyish energy, which seemed to forbid any return to his former regular and conscientious habits and bearing. Though unwilling to associate with him in his present mood, I could not mark, without a certain degree of admiration, the fire of his undaunted eye at each new reprimand or punishment to which his now constant insubordination so frequently exposed him.

One day he approached me, and said:—"Rockingham, you are the only person here who has shown me any kindness. I feel much inclined to ask a great favour of you."

I unhesitatingly promised acquiescence.

"I have no money, as you know, and you have a great deal; if you would lend me one guinea, which I will faithfully return as soon as I have it in my power, I should feel lastingly obliged to you."

"One guinea, my dear fellow," exclaimed I, "say five, ten. I have a great deal more money than I shall ever be able to spend here, and you are most heartily welcome to all that you may require. Let us say five at least."

"No, not five, but I would take two, if I thought you could spare them."

I immediately obtained the two guineas from Thornton, who still had the care of my fortune, and delivered them to Mordaunt.

About a week afterwards, the whole school was roused in the middle of the night by a cry of fire. The flames had broken out in Dr. Wentworth's private house, but they were soon extinguished by the elder boys, and by the servants, acting under the direction of Thornton and of the captain. On the following morning, when the inevitable confusion of such an occurrence had somewhat subsided, it was observed that Mordaunt was missing. An immediate search was made for him, but neither in the school, nor in the premises, could any trace of him be discovered.

Information was lodged with the neighbouring magistrates, and every step, which the circumstances required, was taken, but all proved ineffectual, and he was heard of no more. I could not but guess at the cause of this abrupt and mysterious departure, but I mentioned my misgivings to no one, not even to Thornton. Two years afterwards I received a letter dated from Bombay. It contained the two guineas, returned to me by Mordaunt, and a very laconic account of his escape from Ashton, and of his subsequent voyage to India, in quest of his uncle, whom he had succeeded in finding, and by whose influence he was about to enter the Royal Navy. We did not meet, however, till a later period of our lives.

In the mean time, my friendship for Thornton increased daily.

Though the habits and precedents of the school scarcely admitted of a very close intimacy between a monitor and a boy of the fourth form, circumstances, and our mutual inclination, had brought us into the most confidential connection, and we were now frequently together. I seldom failed to refer to him upon any difficulty which might occur in the course of my studies, and the more I conversed with him, the more surprised and charmed I was at the singular variety of information which, at that early age, he had already acquired. In fact, his whole life seemed absorbed in satisfying the insatiable thirst of his mind for every intellectual acquirement. My intercourse with him, and my continual insight into the workings of his eager and ardent spirit, soon roused in me the kindred fire, and I felt as if all the treasures of knowledge were less boundless than the longings and capacities of my soul.

"It appears to me, Thornton," said I to him one day, after a long series of questions, "that you know everything."

"Everything is a good deal," replied he, smiling.

"But some day you will know all. Some men must have known all things."

"Look here, Rockingham," answered he, after a moment's pause. "You see the sun often, as often as this northern climate allows, and he is nearer to our globe than by far the greater portion of the celestial bodies. Did you ever stretch out your hand and attempt to reach him?"

"No, I feel very sure that I could not."

"But if you were on the top of this house?"

"Scarcely more."

"Or on the summit of Mont Blanc?"

"I should hardly be nearer."

"Well, what the utmost expansion of our frame is to the boundless space of the material creation, such is the sphere and range of our understanding in the illimitable regions of the intellectual world. Newton and Bacon have soared into the one, as Montgolfier has explored the other; yet what has been the extent and the result of their utmost endeavour? But this is rather an abstruse matter for your years; pray let me ask you a far more practical question—Did you ever think of the profession that you will choose?"

"No, I have time enough to reflect, have not I? I think I heard you say once that you were to go into the navy; if so, will not you enter it rather late?"

"No doubt, I am more than sixteen, and should have been afloat now for more than two years; but my father is very anxious that I should go to sea first with an uncle of mine, who is an excellent officer, and circumstances have from month to month delayed his obtaining the command to which he is entitled. In the meanwhile, I learn as much here as I could elsewhere, and, until war breaks out, there is no time really lost. I suppose, however, that any day now, I may be called away. I have also considered, Rockingham, what profession would best suit you, and I think it would likewise be the navy."

"I have sometimes thought so too," Thornton, but it is a hard life."

"It is a hard life, but the noblest and the most glorious for any son of England." He was leaning as he spoke upon a large map which was lying open on his desk in the schoolroom, where we often remained behind during the play-hours, that we might be alone together.

"Look, here, Rockingham," continued he, "would you stay on for ever in this cloud-girt island, when such a world as this is open before you? Here is the Mediterranean. See all the long line of coast which is bathed by its sparkling waves—Italy, Greece, Palestine, Egypt! All those whom we have learned to admire have trodden these shores and hallowed them by their presence and their immortal fame! Would you not for once walk in their footsteps and trace their deathless history in the eternal monuments by which it is recorded? Mark the small space which Syria occupies in this projection. How many among the greatest of mankind had traversed its sultry plains ere they were consecrated for ever by the Saviour's mission! Here Alexander rushed upon his adventurous career. Here lighted the triumphant eagles of Sylla and Cæsar. Here swept the wild horsemen of Mahomet. Here the iron-girt Crusaders first hailed the goal of their sainted enterprise."

"I would, indeed, see that wondrous land!"

"Ay, but there are other and brighter regions, unknown and unheard of by the first and greatest of the sons of men. There, Nature has exhausted her priceless gifts; there, the Creator has decked his work with the choicest beauties in which the Divine eye could rejoice. Here is Rio de Janeiro, to which all the vaunted splendour of Stamboul is but as the dusky twilight to the beaming meridian. Then we reach the boundless Pacific, studded with many an earthly paradise, where every breath of life is a thrill of rapture; and then India! India which sends us all the treasures which to us are the standards of wealth, as a poor specimen of those which the rapacity of man cannot remove. You are worthy, Rockingham, to see all these, not thus faintly traced by the cold hand of science on a senseless sheet of paper, but expanding before you in their real and living glory."

My imagination had never as yet strayed far beyond the precincts of Elmswater or of Ashton; but now, while Thornton spoke, as if meditating aloud rather than addressing me, his melancholy and inspired voice raised within me an almost congenial enthusiasm, and the dark schoolroom seemed to glow with the brightness of the tropical noonday.

"I would, indeed, see all this," replied I, "and see it all with you, for there is more power in your words and look than in all the noble scenes to which they would allure me. Still, I would not turn my back for ever upon England, for surely she does not hold, in the history of the world, the small and obscure place to which she is consigned on this map."

"No, indeed, Rockingham; and she has taught all mankind *what the energies of one small race can achieve*. Still, if we

would truly know, love, and admire our native land, should not we visit those vast foreign empires which she has conquered, and upon which it is our turn to say—that the sun never sets? Where shall we go and not find the footsteps of our adventurous forefathers, and see the gleamings of the meteor flag of England? Wherever we roam, whether in the dreariest or most favoured regions of the globe, we shall never be far from home.”

“Yes, but if the extremities are so worthy of admiration, how far greater surely is the centre of all? Is not that the field where distinction and greatness may be truly acquired?”

At this observation Thornton gazed earnestly in my face, and then closing the map, and taking one small book with him only, he said:—

“Rockingham, you are no longer a child, and your late difficulties have advanced you as much as they would have thrown others back. What we have said as yet, is but the wanderings of school-boy imagination. Come with me to the playground, and we will talk as those should, who perchance have not many days to pass together, before one of them at least enters upon the duties of real life.”

“You will be ambitious,” resumed he, after a short pause; “you will be ambitious like me; I read it from the first day in your looks, even through the diffidence of your age and inexperience. You will wish to be distinguished among men, to inspire, to lead, and to command them. Our positions are in many respects similar, notwithstanding the disparity of aristocratic rank between my father and yours. We are both younger sons, and may doubtless, if we choose, pass a great portion, or indeed the whole of our lives, among the scenes familiar to our childhood, and in the midst of the friends and dependents of our relatives. But what station should we hold there? In the course of time, our parents will be removed from us, our elder brothers will inherit their rank and fortune, and will be called upon to represent the honour and dignities of our forefathers. Such as nature has constituted us, we should both witness, I think, this future disproportion of worldly advantages without envy, but perhaps not without regret, if we had ourselves done nothing by which it might in some way be redeemed. The nearer home we should be, the more the contrast will be felt; but far away, we bear with us a portion of that illustration which may be attached to our names, and the very rank and station of the heads of our families become no longer a reproach, but a protection and a benefit to us.”

“I have often thought lately of what you have been saying,” answered I, “and have asked myself, whether it were quite just, and according to the natural law, that because my brother came into the world a few years before me, he should inherit all, or nearly all that our parents possess?”

“Justice and the natural law!” resumed Thornton. “We must *not hope that they can regulate all in this world, so long as man is imperfect and his nature prone both to evil and to error. Expediency, the true interest of the community, the peculiar require-*

ments of the country to which we belong, are safer and surer guides than the purest abstract theories. The wisdom of our ancestors has established the institutions of England according to the aristocratic principle, with the full sanction of the popular will. Thus we have not only one family raised above all, by common consent, to the first place in the state, but many others peculiarly trained and endowed for the purpose of administering and governing the realm."

"And do you think this principle the best?"

"It is a great question, and to resolve it, we should first ascertain what objects the community, which has adopted this form of government, has more particularly in view. For nations as well as for individuals, comfort and renown are scarcely compatible, and neither can hope to prevail over all competition without submitting to many sacrifices. I will not now inquire too minutely how far the steady and permanent lustre with which England has shone during so many ages, is attributable to her present and time-honoured organization. Seeing her institutions work so successfully, with all their imperfections, for the greatness and general prosperity of our country, I should conceive that every honest and nobler mind should be satisfied to accept them, and to shape its own course according to the peculiar contingencies thus created. But here, we must not forget, Rockingham, that of this peculiar state of society you and I are, in a measure, the victims. Looking to this generation only, it deprives us both of a portion of that which we might easily bring ourselves to consider as our birthright. Should we repine at this, we should uselessly protest, from purely selfish motives, against what is the general will and apparently the general interest. Should we apply all our energies to use the advantages which we may have, and to compensate for the original deficiencies to which we are subjected, we have the greatest and most numerous examples to show that we may acquire all that man can wish for."

"Then, after all, I may some day be my brother's equal?"

"Not exactly," answered Thornton, smiling; "he must represent in the eyes of the world more than you ever can, while he is there, the hereditary glory and greatness of many successive generations. Still, you may rise to such eminence as to insure to you, fully as much as to him, public respect and goodwill."

"But if I acquire these myself, shall not I deserve more credit and honour than my brother, who has merely inherited his title to them?"

"You will, in the opinion of wise and thoughtful men," answered Thornton; "but these do not constitute the community, with whom exterior and adventitious circumstances must always have very great weight. Unless you perform all the exploits of the Duke of Marlborough, you can hardly expect to stand, in the eyes of the world, as your brother's equal."

"Well, I can't but think that we should be judged, esteemed and honoured, according to our personal merits and qualities."

"Judged, esteemed, and honoured, perhaps, but not ranked. See what I was reading just now," continued Thornton, producing

the little book which he had taken with him, and which I saw was the *Thoughts of Pascal*. "Were men to be classed as you would wish, how high the obscure enthusiast who wrote this small work would have stood in the great age to which he belonged! What does he say upon this point, not sarcastically, but seriously: 'Let men, in all our exterior forms, be ranked according to the number of their servants.'"

"You are very fond of that French book, Thornton; do you like it better than Shakspeare, which you also read so often?"

"I can hardly say. It depends upon my mood for the hour. Pascal is the Shakspeare of the mind, as Shakspeare is the Pascal of the heart; each the last sublime expression of our thoughts and of our feelings, when they reach their utmost range. I return to the one or to the other as I may be most disposed to reflect or to imagine."

"I see. But now, as you are kind enough to talk to me this morning so much more than you ever have as yet, pray explain to me how the number of servants can be held fairly to regulate rank?"

"You must understand, Rockingham, that Pascal is not speaking here quite practically, but rather laying down a principle philosophically, and in the abstract. You ask why the number of servants should be the test. Simply because this is a self-evident, and, as he says, a demonstrative qualification, and can, perhaps, better than any other, be asserted without disturbing the peace of society. Should we all claim precedence according to our own notions of our intellectual endowments, think of the eternal conflict which must be waged, and how often the darker and the fiercer passions would prevail over the nobler and the more exalted. Believe me, Rockingham, our pretensions need not soar higher than those of Pascal. Never think, therefore, of contesting the superior rank which, except he forfeit it by some grave misconduct, your brother must hold in the opinion of the community; but rejoicing rather that you have been born in so lofty a station, consider how you may yourself add something to the distinction of your family, and achieve the greatest amount of personal renown."

"And for this purpose you think the navy the best profession?"

"Decidedly. It is for all Englishmen the first, the most natural, and the most popular. It is, besides, for both of us, and far more for you than for me, that in which the interest of our families may most contribute to our advancement."

"But you, Thornton, will require little patronage and protection to insure your success."

"Ah!" replied he, with something of despondency in his look.

"The battle of life is not as the boyish competition of this school, ever regulated by the vigilance of a superior authority. The attainments which give the first rank here, have not the same *decisive* influence without. Energy of will, constancy of purpose, *enduring strength* of the frame, all are there required to support the more intellectual qualifications, when they enter the field no longer with a class but with a generation. Fervently as I have

longed for this conflict, I have some misgivings that the very ardour with which I enter upon it will often mislead and betray me. Within a few short months, I shall be called upon to judge and to decide for myself, and all the maturity of experience may be requisite before I have had an opportunity of acquiring it. There will be no Dr. Wentworth there, Rockingham, to advise and to guide us."

"Still, though our schoolmasters will no longer be at hand, we shall not be quite unprotected. Will not God be there, who directs all things for the best?"

"Here we should pause," replied Thornton, "for we are entering upon the greatest question of all."

"Oh, do not rest here, now that we have proceeded so far," exclaimed I, with the eagerness of my age; "but tell me what you think on that point."

"Well," resumed he, smiling, "inasmuch as I can at present judge, the general mechanism of the universe must be ruled by some superior Providence, and this, I conceive, no one who has ever reflected can deny. But how far we should be justified in expecting that the power which has created the heavenly bodies, and which regulates their march, will equally interfere to accomplish all that we may require, is a very different and a far more abstruse matter. Say what we will, the omniscience of God will not be shaped to the proportions of our intellect, nor His action to our judgment."

"Still, Thornton, we are ordered to pray to Him constantly, and on all subjects."

"Ay, as in a minor degree we are taught to respect the king, and to perform many other duties, because, by the consent of the wisest and of the best, they are reckoned duties, but not with any practical or interested object more immediately in view. To trust in God is a safe and sure doctrine; but it must not be lightly invoked to raise unfounded expectations, to dispense us with individual exertion, and to avert the inevitable sufferings and sacrifices of a life devoted to constant and ardent competition. Besides, who will say how far the dreams of our ambition are sanctioned by the divine countenance? When did God promise us happiness, distinction, success, and encourage us so eagerly to pursue them?"

"But surely these desires and feelings proceed from Him, since we find them within us?"

"That is not quite what we are taught by religion," replied Thornton, smiling. "There is that within us by which we must be guided, and that which we must distrust, that which would lead us to heaven, and that which would drive us on to perdition. How to distinguish truly between these conflicting elements of our complex being is the study of a life. The sages of antiquity allured mankind to virtue, by constantly extolling and exalting every nobler impulse and propensity of the mind; the Redeemer, by stimulating us to continual conflict with all its baser inclinations."

"And which system has been really most successful?"

"I should be inclined to think that one made greater, and the other better men. However that may be, there is no denying that the principal object of our religion, which no one can admire more than I do, is to regulate and even to check worldly ambition. It is she who shows us how wide is the range of evil and misery here below, not that we may despair of the divine justice, but that we may seek for its operation in a better and a brighter sphere. Still, and notwithstanding the emphatic terms in which religion adjures us to repress all the fiercer and more malignant passions which inordinate emulation may excite, I cannot bring myself to conceive that we should altogether repudiate the feeling which prompts us to respect ourselves and to make the utmost use of the faculties within us. To this sentiment, as to the origin of most of what is really great and good, I will fearlessly commit the guidance of my future life, trusting in the protection of the Almighty, but confiding also in the powers with which it has pleased Him to endow me, and remembering that I am the free, though ever-erring agent of my own destiny."

Thus Thornton and I conversed together; thus when life was as a bright day dawning upon us, I learned from him to reflect, adopting his opinions when they were formed, and eagerly seeking for the undiscovered truth, wherever he pointed out a track that might lead to it.

One morning, when I had been rather more than a year at Ashton, I saw Thornton moving hastily across the playground towards me, with an open letter in his hands, and I perceived, by his expanded eye, that he had received some important intelligence.

"Rockingham," said he, "my uncle has been appointed to a fine frigate, and I must leave Ashton immediately. In half an hour the mail will be here. Come with me, and help me to pack up my things."

As my friend thus addressed me, I burst into tears; they flowed fast as I mournfully placed his clothes in his small portmanteau, and still faster when he gave me a little gold pin, which he always wore, requesting me to keep it for his sake. We then adjourned to the study. The doctor bade Thornton farewell, with many marks of the interest which he had ever borne him. Ere we retired, Mrs. Wentworth entered. Thornton approached her respectfully, and told her that he was about to leave Ashton.

"Indeed, so soon!" said she, with more of regret in her voice than I had expected.

"Madam," said Thornton, with the only tear I had ever seen there, standing in his beaming eye, "if ever by word, thought or look, I have failed in the respect and affection which I owed you, I trust and entreat that you will forgive me in this hour that we part, perhaps for ever. I shall always be grateful for the kindness you have shown to me, and shall ever pray, that you may be as happy as you deserve to be."

Mrs. Wentworth's handkerchief so completely concealed her eyes and face, that I could not tell what her feelings might have been. She held out her hand to Thornton; he pressed it to his lips, and

again grasping that of the kind-hearted schoolmaster, he hastily withdrew.

When we reached the hall door, the sound of the approaching wheels of the mail was distinctly heard.

"Rockingham," said Thornton, "I fervently trust that we may one day meet again; think sometimes of your absent friend, and remember his last parting word of advice—SELF-RELIANCE.

The coach was close at hand: "Now then, young man, look sharp, for we are already late," cried the burly driver. Thornton was soon seated close behind him, the mail moved rapidly round the corner of the road, and I saw my friend no more.

Thus we parted, but not for ever. We were destined to meet again, not in the green and peaceful fields of our native land, but far over the Atlantic, in the stern array of approaching combat, with the standard of England waving over our heads, and the welcome bullets falling fast around us. Thus we met once more: but I must not anticipate.

CHAPTER X.

Alas! what need you be so bolsterous rough;
I will not struggle, I will stand stone still.—K. JOHN.

THE departure of Thornton left a deep and lasting gloom upon my spirits. I felt as if the radiant light which had as yet illumined my path was withdrawn from before me, and that my mind was again wandering in its dreary and cheerless solitude. Still, I followed up my studies with steadiness and assiduity, and no longer exposed myself to censure or to punishment. As time had long since effaced my momentary sentiments of ill-will and revenge towards Mrs. Wentworth, no sooner was I deprived of the society of Thornton, than my heart returned to her with more than its former devotion. I fancied that on the day which had followed the departure of my friend, I had observed once more in her countenance an expression of kindness and of sympathy for me; if such was her feeling, however, it was again but a slight and transient impression. In vain I endeavoured to recall it; in vain, during the whole of dinner, would my look imploringly follow her, wherever she sat, or wherever she moved. I could not but see how visionary were all my hopes, and that there was nothing now but indifference for me in her heart as on her haughty brow; she never addressed me, she never spoke of me, and her averted eye met mine no longer.

Insensibly, the boyish passions which my earlier adventures at Ashton had aroused within me, were worked into a new paroxysm by these marks of continual disregard from the present idol of my thoughts. Had she never smiled upon me, had she never praised me, had she never rejoiced in my successes, I could perhaps, have borne with her present cold and listless estrangement; but when I thought of the many marks of more than maternal love that she

had shown me, and how I had forfeited and rejected that affection, my childish heart was maddened. I could not bear that she should never think of me, and I longed and prayed those days might return, when the very severity of the punishments which I had endured, had moved her to something of compassion and of kindness.

So absorbed was I by this new train of feelings, that I one Sunday designedly appeared at the inspection with my shirt and hands sprinkled over with ink, trusting that I might thus induce her at least to take some notice of me. As she passed by, I heard her whisper to the captain not to report me, as she did not wish me to be punished any more, but to see if there was not still time for me to alter my dress, so as to make a more creditable appearance at church. How I should have preferred to the sentiment which, as I conceived, this very indulgence revealed, that penalty to which, but for her advice, and that of Thornton, I should not have submitted a few months before! How little could Mrs. Wentworth read in the heart of her repudiated favourite, or she would surely not have doomed it to such deep and hopeless suffering!

As yet, I had spent my holidays at Ashton, where a few boys always remained at that time, under the care of one of the masters, Mr. and Mrs. Wentworth generally making some short excursions on these occasions. When I had been nearly two years at school, I was much surprised, as the Christmas vacation was approaching, to receive a kind invitation for the season from some distant relatives of the family, who had been accidentally informed of my forlorn situation. I trusted that on bidding Mrs. Wentworth farewell, I might receive from her some slight testimony of interest; but alas! her kiss was reserved for Rochford, and for two or three other favourites; to me, she merely held out her hand, and her manner was so cold and distant that I could not venture to address one word to her.

It was the same when I returned from the residence of my new friends, where I happily passed my holidays; and for two whole years more, I succeeded in making no further progress with the implacable mistress of my affections. During this interval, I spent two vacations in London with Lady Sheerness, but no incident there occurred which has left any impression upon my memory.

Thus I reached my fourteenth year. The summer holidays were again at hand, and having received no invitation from my aunt, or from any of my relations, I was destined to remain on at Ashton, together with six other boys, who were in the same predicament as myself. Mrs. Wentworth not being very well, did not on this occasion accompany her husband in his journey to London, for which he started on the very day that our vacation commenced. The school was left under the sole care of the under-master, the *the two others* having obtained leave of absence; but he was *attacked three days* after the head master's departure by a malignant fever of so serious a nature that it was considered advisable

to remove him entirely from the house. Mrs. Wentworth immediately apprised her husband of this event, entreating him to return forthwith. The doctor, however, being detained in town by business of importance, requested his wife to take charge herself of the school for a very few days, desiring her to appoint me, as being the only fifth-form boy then at Ashton, her permanent monitor, and to obtain the assistance of her brother, should any untoward difficulty arise.

When she received this answer, Mrs. Wentworth sent for me. It was the first time that I had been alone with her since the departure of Thornton. She showed me her husband's letter, and said :—

"You see, Rockingham, what Dr. Wentworth expects of you."

"I will do everything in my power to act up to his wishes, and to yours, ma'am," replied I, much elated at this prospect of being again brought into communication with her.

"What lessons were appointed for the boys by the under-master when he fell ill?"

"Only three hours a day, ma'am; an hour of Latin, an hour of English, and an hour of arithmetic and geography."

"I wish it," resumed she, "to continue in the same manner now. I will go three times a day to the schoolroom, to see that the lessons are properly got through. In this you will assist me, as well as in keeping up discipline and general good conduct. I trust that nothing will occur which it will be necessary for me to visit with censure or punishment. You may, however, if you think it advisable, tell your schoolfellows that, should it be requisite, I shall instantly send for my brother, with whom, as they know, perhaps, it is better not to trifle."

I returned to the schoolroom, most anxious to fulfil my new duties. I informed my companions of the authority which had been vested in me, and I requested them to assist me to their utmost in acting up to Mrs. Wentworth's directions. Luckily for me, those I now addressed were among the most quiet and orderly of my schoolfellows, and I had not much trouble in insuring their good conduct.

Three times a day Mrs. Wentworth came to the schoolroom and with the clearness and penetration which distinguished her, interrogated the boys and directed their studies in the three appointed branches. I was each time more struck, notwithstanding the simplicity of her manner, with the depth and variety of her information, and she herself seemed surprised at the progress I had made since the time when she had taken some interest in my attainments. Though her manner was at first extremely distant, as if to mark that it was by her husband's orders, and from no inclination of her own, that we were thus brought into communication, yet she insensibly appeared moved by the tremulous anxiety with which I laboured to give her satisfaction, and was each day led into more frequent and less reserved intercourse with me.

Never in my life had I been happier than in those few days

I had again most unexpectedly reached the utmost zenith of my hopes. I could continually gaze upon that countenance whose varying expressions I so loved to trace; I could constantly hear the sounds of that voice which so thrilled upon my heart, whether it conveyed approbation or reproof; I could hour by hour regain that long-lost and long-sighed-for affection. Still I could not but remark that either from indisposition, or from the effects of some silent and concealed sorrow, Mrs. Wentworth's character was more hasty, wayward, and capricious than before, and though her eyes when they smiled had lost none of their charm, they would kindle oftener than of yore, and the frown would more frequently sit upon her brow.

One day, as she had been more impatient than usual, and notwithstanding my utmost efforts to prepare my young companions for the Latin class, they failed in answering to her complete satisfaction. Attributing this imperfection on their part to my negligence, she addressed to me several severe reprimands, which I silently endured, though they wounded me deeply. When we went in to dinner she entered with her friend Emily, who had lately been married, and with whom she was more intimate than ever. Their conversation turned evidently upon some matter which interested and irritated Mrs. Wentworth; and, from the sharpness with which she occasionally answered her friend, it appeared to me that she was repelling some imputation which her companion had reported to her as having been credited, not by herself, but by others.

On that day our dinner was not very good. I had seen two of the boys exchange a very significant look, conveying that such was their impression, and I had also observed that this look had been remarked by Mrs. Wentworth, even in the midst of her animated conversation. Unfortunately I was suffering myself from a very severe sore throat, and being dispirited besides by the occurrences of the morning, I felt very little appetite. Thus, notwithstanding my best endeavours, I made so little progress, that Mrs. Wentworth's attention was attracted, and she asked me impatiently why I was eating in so extraordinary a manner.

Before I had had time to answer, she desired me in the same tone to mind what I was about, and to finish my dinner. I was most anxious not to disobey this injunction, but it was perfectly impossible for me to get through all that had been placed before me. My next neighbour, having a most excellent appetite, and remarking the predicament in which I was placed, intimated, by a very appropriate gesture, that he would be happy to see me transfer to his plate whatever was likely to remain upon mine. This we managed to accomplish without attracting Mrs. Wentworth's observation; but the fair Emily's eyes, which were always straying about in search of mischief, detected the manoeuvre. *She did not fail at once to report it in a whisper to her companion, who immediately called me to her.*

"Did I not desire you to finish your dinner, sir," said she,

giving way upon this slight pretext to the irritation which for some time I had remarked in her looks, and perhaps not unwilling to impart to her rather sceptical friend a high notion of her provisional authority over us. "Is it not singular that you, who should give here the example of obedience and of good conduct, should again be doing that which, as you know, annoys me more than anything. Come nearer, sir," continued she, and very much, as I thought, to the amusement of her ally, her fair hand was brought very sharply in contact with my cheek.

I was much grieved and hurt, but I said nothing. Indeed, I think that Mrs. Wentworth herself soon regretted having been betrayed into an act so likely to affect the very position which she wished and required me to hold among my younger companions; for during the class that afternoon she treated me with the most marked distinction, and made every reparation that her kindest manner could convey. The incident, however, indirectly led to more serious consequences.

Mr. Osborne, Mrs. Wentworth's brother, had an only son, very delicate in health, and then about nine years old, who, though not regularly belonging to the school, attended daily for a few hours, returning home in the evening. His father was generally hated by the boys, not only on account of his connection with Mrs. Wentworth, but because he was himself reckoned to instigate the head master to his acts of greatest severity. Young Charles Osborne would therefore have been much ill-treated had it not been for the protection which, on account of his aunt, I constantly afforded to him. He consequently was very much attached to me, and never failed to claim my assistance in all his difficulties.

On the day following that upon which I had received the last public token of Mrs. Wentworth's displeasure, I found, as I entered the playground, young Charlie in tears. Having inquired into the cause of his distress, I learned that one of the boys had thrown a new ball, that had lately been given to the little fellow by his aunt, over the double wall which separated our field from the private flower-garden. Anxious to oblige him, I sprang over the two walls, and soon redeemed for him the missing plaything. To testify the joy which he felt at recovering it, he foolishly threw into the air before him a large stone that he held in his hand. I watched the missile with some alarm, as it flew in the direction of the house, and a loud crash soon warned us that it had fatally fallen into one of the lower windows. Young Osborne immediately took to flight, after obtaining my promise that I would not betray him; and as there was now no help for the accident, I proceeded to the rectory, whither I had just before requested Mrs. Wentworth's permission to repair, for the purpose of borrowing an historical work, which I was desirous of consulting. On my return to the schoolroom, I found that great events were at hand there.

In the middle of the room stood Mrs. Wentworth, her cheek pale with anger, and her dark eye flashing fire. I had never seen that expression upon her countenance since the day when her husband *had reproved her before the whole school.* By her stood her

brother, apparently just alighted from horseback, and holding in his hand a heavy riding-whip, at which my young companions were glancing with undisguised anxiety.

"I insist upon knowing,—I am determined to know who did it," cried Mrs. Wentworth, striking the floor with her slender foot, while her small hand was clenched with all the force it could command.

"Come, boys," said her brother, "you will gain nothing at all by attempting to deceive us. One of you must have done it, and if he will not own, I will flog each of you in succession until I have discovered him."

The whole six answered together, protesting of their innocence and absolute ignorance with the most earnest asseverations.

"Of course," exclaimed the fierce surgeon, "it is always so; it broke itself. However, you will find me as good as my word, and whoever it may be, were it my own son, he will remember this day so long as he lives."

"I wish you to know," said Mrs. Wentworth, turning to me, "that this stone must have been designedly thrown into my sitting-room, for it came as far as my table, and shattered there the very china cup I most value."

"It may have been done by accident," answered I, most anxious to pacify her.

"Accident or no accident," said the surgeon, "I have pledged my word to find out who it was, and so I will. Now you, sir, who appear the youngest lad, I will try you first. You persist in saying that you did not do it?"

"Indeed, sir, I did not," answered the little boy in the greatest alarm.

I was myself sorely perplexed. I was very loath to break my promise to Charlie, the more so that I knew he was harshly brought up, and would upon this occasion be treated with great severity: but I also felt most unwilling that others who were completely innocent should suffer in his stead. While I was debating with myself how I could act with the greatest fairness to all parties, Mr. Osborne had followed up his interrogatory with the youngest boy by two or three very sharp strokes from his whip. This infliction produced a paroxysm of pain and terror, in the midst of which the victim was heard indistinctly murmuring that he had seen me, immediately after dinner, jumping over the double wall from the private garden.

All eyes were now fixed upon me.

"Can this be true, Rockingham?" said Mrs. Wentworth, evidently much surprised.

"I did go over to the garden, ma'am," answered I; "but I had nothing to do with the accident."

At this statement she looked still more perplexed; and upon her brother asking her if it was not I who had formerly thrown a stone at her, she replied in the affirmative.

"And have you had occasion to punish him again lately?" continued Mr. Osborne.

"I certainly was obliged to do so yesterday."

"I might have guessed as much," resumed the surgeon, "and for my part I can have no doubt that this has been some new device of his to testify his resentment. What else could he be doing in the garden precisely at the same time?"

I was anxious to find some answer which would be in accordance both with the truth, and with my intentions towards young Osborne; but my embarrassment and hesitation were not unnaturally attributed to my interrogators to other motives. Alas for human nature! How kindred is the expression of embarrassed innocence to that of conscious guilt!

"You see by his face that he did it," said Mr. Osborne to his sister; "he can't even find a word to say for himself."

I again most solemnly renewed my former declaration.

"I shall not believe you," rejoined he, "until you tell me who it was: you certainly must know, as you must have been close by at the time. Was it any one here?"

"No, sir," replied I, looking round.

"And surely all the boys now at Ashton are here?"

"Why, yes, sir, I think so."

"You think so. Don't you see it? or do you mean to pretend that my boy had anything to do with it?"

"Oh! no, sir, not at all."

"I daresay that you would be very glad that we thought so. Come, you had better confess at once," continued he, seizing me roughly by the collar.

Mrs. Wentworth evidently considered that I fully deserved the forthcoming punishment: still, as she was unwilling to witness it, she was withdrawing, but her brother insisted upon her remaining present.

"You need not be ashamed, Isabella," said he, "to see a boy's shoulders, and I want him to own to you that he did it."

"I again most fully deny it," exclaimed I; "and I beg to remind you that I am a monitor, and that you are not justified in laying hands upon me."

"Monitor, nonsense," replied he. "I know very well that you are only in the fifth form. If Dr. Wentworth were here, he would act as I shall now. Will you take off your jacket, or must I call the servant?"

"As Mrs. Wentworth appears to approve, I shall make no resistance," replied I, and in a minute my shoulders were bare, and my hands fastened by Mr. Osborne with his sister's handkerchief, to the well-known hook. The blows fell with fearful force, but I was as determined to be silent as the surgeon was to extract some revelation from me.

When I had received about half a dozen strokes, he stopped and asked me if I was willing to confess.

I again replied by a firm denial.

"Will you venture to say that you do not know who it is?"

"No, sir, I never said that."

"Then you do know who it is?"

"I do, sir."

"And you won't say?"

"I will not, sir."

"That we shall soon see," cried the infuriated Mr. Osborne, preparing to resume his operations.

Mrs. Wentworth had long ere this discovered, as I had on my own account, during my short alliance with Mordaunt, the inconvenience of being bound to an associate of a more relentless disposition than her own. She endeavoured, first by words, then more effectually to oppose the exercise of any further severity towards me, but her brother thrust her roughly aside.

"Now you had better keep out of the way, Isabella," exclaimed he, "or you may get hit yourself, which you won't much like, I can tell you. I did not ask you to send for me, but as you have put the matter into my hands, I shall certainly manage it as I think best," and the blows were renewed with even redoubled violence.

I had from the first felt that it was no longer with the infirm arm of the under-master that I had to deal, and though my strength and power of endurance had much increased since I had last been subjected to a somewhat similar fate, the suffering was so much greater, that I finally gave way still more completely than before.

In the mean time, Mrs. Wentworth had not relaxed in her endeavours to arrest her brother's arm. "It is enough—it is a great deal too much. It is shocking—it is horrible. I will not allow it any more," and she finally prevailed.

When released at length, I fell heavily to the floor, rolling my burning shoulders upon the hard boards in speechless agony.

"I am very sorry that it should have come to this," said Mrs. Wentworth, now somewhat recovering her tone of authority; "but such a combination of misconduct and falsehood deserved an exemplary punishment. I trust that this will be a warning to you all. Of course, you will no longer consider Rockingham as your monitor."

This allocution being concluded, and the surgeon having desired me to rise immediately, and to re-adjust my dress, I was conducted to the small room where I had formerly been confined, and there left in solitude.

The pain I still endured was very great, but a strange feeling of mingled joy and exultation filled my heart. I HAD PREVAILED—no human power had wrested from me the declaration which I was unwilling to make. I then learned that I had that within me which, when fully roused, could dare every extremity of suffering and of peril; which, exalted by every real emergency, would ever insure the victory of conscience and of honour. I have since faced dangers and trials to which those of that day were but as the strength of a child to the full-grown vigour of manhood; but ever in each most awful hour the memory of that early triumph has *sustained me*, and inspired me with that firmness of purpose which *my bitterest enemies* have in vain attempted to assail. On this *occasion*, however, as on many others, my spirit fell as it had

risen, with the crisis, and exhausted by the pain and excitement I had gone through, I was soon fast asleep.

It was nearly dark, when I was awakened by the housemaid, desiring me to repair immediately to Mrs. Wentworth's sitting-room. Some moments elapsed ere I could absolutely recover my consciousness, and when I stood up, though still upheld by a sentiment of inward satisfaction, I found myself singularly weak and confused. I, however, obeyed the summons with the utmost alacrity. Mrs. Wentworth was alone with young Osborne when I entered, and she immediately exclaimed, in a hurried voice:—

"What is this, Rockingham? Here is Charlie, who has just run over to tell me that it was he who, by accident, threw the stone which broke my window and my cup. Can it indeed be so?"

I looked at Charlie, who was in tears, and seeing that there was no further reason for concealment, I said that I believed his statement to be correct.

"Then what on earth," replied Mrs. Wentworth, "could have induced you to undergo such a punishment, and to mislead us, as you have done, rather than tell the whole truth at once? Come, let me know everything now."

"Well, ma'am," said I, "if you had asked me in private before, perhaps I should have told you all, and requested your indulgence for Charlie, who, as I saw, threw the stone quite accidentally."

"Nonsense."

"Indeed, ma'am, I am speaking nothing but the truth and I thought it better for him that he should state his own case, when such serious consequences might be apprehended. You will remember that Mr. Osborne said he would punish his own son, were it he, and I was quite sure that he would do so."

"And why was not he to be punished as well as you, if he were really guilty?"

"Why, ma'am," answered I, not a little abashed by this question, "in the first place, he is not very strong. Then, perhaps, though you could not have wished him, after all that had been said, to be spared merely because he was your nephew, I was certain it would make you unhappy to see him severely used. I know that you have often interceded for him with his father."

"But, you silly child, did it not strike you that I might have the same feeling with respect to yourself?"

I gazed anxiously in Mrs. Wentworth's face, but made no answer.

"So this was your motive, my poor boy," continued she, pressing me to her heart. "You have indeed been most unjustly and cruelly treated. Never shall I forgive myself for having allowed it;" and, as I rested in her arms, I felt the warm tears dropping fast upon my cheek. Pressing her hand to my lips, I entreated her to think no more of it, as all was over now.

"How pale and wan you are, my child," resumed she, after a moment's silence, "you seem unwell and unhappy."

"I have not been very well for the last two days," replied I.

the most cheerful voice I could command, "but I am not unhappy now. I would go through again, every day, every hour, all that I have suffered since I came to Ashton, if I could hear you speak to me thus, and see you smile upon me once more."

"Oh, those eyes!" said Mrs. Wentworth, again clasping me closer to her. "Do you know that you must not look at me in this manner?"

"Well, I won't look at you," answered I, hiding my face in her arms, "but I will tell you all that I have undergone, since you withdrew your protection from me." And then the whole tale of my long-concealed feelings and sorrows burst from my lips. Where did I find thoughts to conceive it, or words to utter it? It was no combination of the mind, no effort of the tongue; it flowed direct from the heart, unbidden, unsought, irrepressible!

"My poor Edward," exclaimed Mrs. Wentworth, at length, "for I will always call you so now, your childhood has early learned a hard lesson; may you never be taught it hereafter in real earnest. Now come upstairs with me, and I will see what I can do to recruit your strength."

I followed her up to her bedroom; I had never seen it before, and was much struck with the extreme neatness and comfort of its almost luxurious arrangements. Having ascertained that my shoulders still gave me much pain, she desired me to uncover them, that she might apply to them some healing lotion. I proceeded to obey with a feeling of unaccountable trepidation, far greater than that which I had experienced in the morning, when a similar injunction had been conveyed under circumstances so different. But my shirt adhered firmly to my lacerated skin, and before I could slip my arms through it, I was obliged to tear it away with some force. The pain was great, and accompanied this time by a strange feeling of weakness and oppression within.

Leaning for support against the bedpost, I indistinctly heard the voice of Mrs. Wentworth saying: "Edward—good God! what is the matter with the boy?"

When I recovered my senses, I found myself in Mrs. Wentworth's bed, where I had been placed, no doubt, by her and her maid, both being in close attendance upon me. The former anxiously inquired for me when she saw my eyes open again.

"Oh! I am quite well, ma'am," said I, attempting to rise; but my strength was not equal to my alacrity of will, and I again fell heavily back.

"You must not think of stirring," exclaimed Mrs. Wentworth, replacing my head upon the pillow, with more than maternal tenderness; and she added in a whisper to her maid: "I wish to Heaven my brother would come."

Just then a knock was heard at the door, and Mr. Osborne entered. After a short conversation, Mrs. Wentworth approached the bedside with him: he looked attentively at me, felt my pulse, examined my shoulders, and said:—

"It is only a little weakness, proceeding from over-excitement. I will send a cordial mixture, which he must take three or four

times during the night. He must also stay perfectly quiet where he is until to-morrow, when I will come and see him early, and shake hands with him again, for he is a very gallant little fellow."

After these instructions had been delivered, some more conversation passed, in a low voice, at the further end of the room, between Mr. Osborne, his sister, and her maid. I could observe that each party smiled in turn, and that Mrs. Wentworth blushed slightly, while the two others seemed to be reproaching her with some unnecessary scruples.

Suddenly Mr. Osborne called across the room to ask me how old I was.

I answered, nearly fourteen.

"Surely, then, you don't think that Wentworth will be jealous," said he, addressing his sister; and upon this observation I heard a slight laugh, in which all three seemed to join as they left the room together.

In about half an hour Mrs. Wentworth returned; she gave me a glass of the prescribed cordial, and then raising her finger, said in a tone of tender admonition:—

"You must now go to sleep, and mind you lie very still, just where you are. Should you require anything in the night, you may call, as I shall not be very far away."

Obeys strictly this injunction, I slept quietly the whole night; but there was in that sleep an enduring thrill of happiness which I had never yet known. I could see and feel no one near me, saving on the two occasions when my draught was administered to me by a person whose long flowing hair was darker than that of Mrs. Wentworth's maid; but a celestial being, whom I ventured neither to approach nor to behold, seemed ever at my side, ever watching over my pillow, ever imparting to me a rapture of security that I had never experienced before. What feeling was that, so pure, so unearthly, and yet so all-absorbing? If it was the first early dawning of love upon my soul, how ill the burning meridian has since kept the promise of its glowing morn!

CHAPTER XI.

Too early seen unknown, and known too late!—ROMEO AND JULIET.

THE next day was fast advancing when I was fully aroused from my sleep, or rather from the long trance of that night. Mrs. Wentworth was standing, now completely dressed, at my bedside; she examined my shoulders with the same feeling that she had evinced on the evening before, and having ascertained that I felt quite myself again, advised me to get up.

When I went down, we breakfasted together, and then adjourned to the schoolroom. No sooner were we there, than Mrs. Wentworth, addressing the boys, said:—

"I wish you to know, that your schoolfellow and monitor, Rockingham, was yesterday most unjustly punished here. I deeply regret that he allowed us to consider him as guilty, to save my nephew; and I am sure that you will all admire, as much I do, the noble and generous sentiment displayed by him on this occasion."

The boys answered by a general murmur of assent. I then resumed my duties as before; but how altered was Mrs. Wentworth's manner! Never until then had I fully known the fascination of her beaming eye, or of her voice, now tremulous with the deep and almost respectful affection inspired by my late conduct. Dr. Wentworth's return was day by day deferred for nearly a week more, during which time I was in hourly intercourse with his wife, and nothing which the heart of woman could devise was neglected by her to efface from my mind all recollection of her former severity. As we conversed upon every subject, I was each day more amazed at the extent of her knowledge; and though the fire which burned in the soul of Thornton far more gently animated hers, I felt my eager thirst for information awakened and allayed in turn during each new interview with her.

At length Dr. Wentworth arrived, and soon afterwards the holidays expired, the absent boys returned, and the ordinary habits of the school were resumed. I now felt that my real disposition was understood and appreciated, and acting with less diffidence than before, after my own judgment and impulse, I succeeded in maintaining my new position with the approbation and goodwill of all around me. I thus became so contented and happy at Ashton, that I was struck with a feeling of the deepest regret when I was informed one morning that a messenger had been sent to conduct me to Elmswater, where my father was hourly expected.

Many were the tears I shed when, leaning on Mrs. Wentworth's bosom, I bade her farewell; but how far bitterer would they have been had I then known what that parting was! She herself appeared to entertain some misgivings about my return to Ashton, for she questioned me closely with respect to my exact age, as well as to my prospects and wishes concerning the profession I should embrace. When I told her that I hoped in time to enter the navy,—

"Oh! not the navy," said she, with a slight shudder; "that may do very well for a young reprobate like Mordaunt, but not for you. You must not leave England, and all the friends you have here."

"The navy is the profession for Englishmen, and for men," replied I.

"Nonsense, you foolish child. But we shall take care and detain you nearer home."

With these words, and many mutual professions of affection, we parted.

My grief was great and sincere; but schoolboys' tears do not flow for ever, particularly when they are in a stage-coach on their way home; and the joy of returning to Elmswater, after this long absence, had replaced all other feelings long before its venerat

towers broke upon my sight through the high woods around them. I was first welcomed home by my faithful Richards ; a moment afterwards locked in the arms of Julie, who could scarcely be persuaded to release me, when she was told that my father was expecting me immediately.

When I entered his library, it struck me that the expression of his countenance was more serious and pensive than of yore ; but if any alteration had occurred in his appearance, I gradually became unconscious of it, as we conversed together. He received me most kindly, and seemed pleased at seeing me so much grown, and in such good health : his satisfaction increased upon reading a letter I brought him from Dr. Wentworth.

"Edward," said he, "this is a most excellent report, and does you the greatest credit. I am delighted to find that you have got over the little difficulties that your aunt mentioned to me. I have been extremely sorry to remain so long without seeing you ; but now I trust that we shall be some little time together. You have worked very well at school, and you must for the present amuse yourself as best you can here."

I certainly acted most conscientiously up to this injunction of my father's, and, overjoyed at being again at my beloved Elmswater, with greater liberty than I had ever been allowed before, I was from morning till night engaged in the pleasures and pursuits of a country life, to which my natural disposition has ever most strongly allured me. About a week after my return home, my brother joined us, for one day only, as he was finishing his studies at Eton. I was much struck with his manly air and bearing ; but though we met with great cordiality, we conversed but little together.

Soon afterwards, Lady Sheerness, in consequence of a most pressing invitation from my father, arrived at Elmswater, but not alone. She brought with her a little girl, of about my age, of whom I had often heard before, though I had never yet seen her. She was the only child of another of my father's sisters, whose husband, a distinguished officer, had amassed a considerable fortune in the Indian wars. Sophia Waldegrave, having lost both her parents, was now brought up under the care of her guardian, Lord Arlingford, and under the immediate direction of our common aunt, Lady Sheerness. When informed of the approaching arrival of my cousin, I had vowed, with true schoolboy feelings, to have very little communication with her ; but so soon as we actually met, there was something so ingenuous in her countenance, so simple and so cordial in her manner, that we were immediately on terms of the greatest intimacy.

During the very first evening, Sophia told me that she had long been anxious to know me, as she had so often heard of me.

"Not much good, I fear," said I, "if it was from Lady Sheerness."

"Well," said Sophia smiling, "she was certainly always telling me that you got into sad scrapes at school ; but I like you all the better for it, because I know myself how unjust she often is."

is always scolding me, and telling me that I shall be a disgrace to my family, like somebody else."

"We won't mind her much now, Sophia, if we can sometimes meet."

"Oh, I hope we shall, though I know that they wish to keep us apart. You must make up to Mademoiselle, for it is she who in fact rules, although my English governess takes precedence, as my aunt would say."

"Have you got two governesses?"

"Yes, and I am to have a French maid too here, I am told. You have no idea how they persecute me, telling me from morning until night that I am to be a great heiress, and making that an excuse for every species of vexation."

"Now, Sophia," cried Lady Sheerness, across the room, "do hold up your head. I really can't think where that girl got those slouching habits; there was no better family in England than the Waldegraves, yet she sits and walks like a farmer's daughter."

Sophia exchanged with me a look of deep meaning, but obeyed her aunt's admonition without any observation.

I soon found that there was something in the spirit as well as in the position of my cousin singularly congenial to mine, and our mutual endeavours succeeded in bringing us into constant intercourse. According to her advice, I was unremitting in my attentions to Mademoiselle, and my knowledge of the French language made me a particular favourite with her. Julie being, besides, the additional maid whom my cousin had mentioned to me, I was enabled also, through this faithful ally, to be in more continual communication with Sophia than would have been possible in other circumstances. We walked together, we read together, we played together, and each day increased the pure and fraternal affection which, from the first, had sprung up between us.

With boyish chivalry, I defended my cousin from the frequent and unjust censures of Lady Sheerness, and she, in turn, vindicated me, with no less devotedness, from those which our amiable aunt was ever casting upon me, as well as upon all around her, with the exception, perhaps, of my elder brother. I could not but perceive that the growing intimacy between Sophia and me, did not escape the observation, and consequent disapproval, of this personage; but a secret feeling, which warned me that my days at Elmswater were numbered, impelled me to follow my own inclinations so long as I remained there, even at the risk of shortening still more my sojourn with my family.

I was, therefore, not very much astonished when one day, after a long and ominous conversation with his sister, my father rather abruptly asked me if ever I had thought of the profession upon which I should wish to enter.

"Yes, sir," said I, "with your approval, I should like to go into the navy."

"Indeed," answered my father, apparently rather surprised at my decided tone. "The navy! Well, you have a very fair chance of becoming an admiral, like your great uncle there, at the other

end of the room. I certainly think that you cannot make a better choice, but it must come from yourself; I should be sorry to say anything that could prejudice you for or against a profession which must be neither lightly embraced, nor lightly abandoned."

"My mind has been quite made up for some time past," replied I.

"If so, Edward, you are doubtless aware that you must enter upon the duties of this service much earlier than upon those of any other profession which you might choose. How old are you now?"

"I am more than fourteen and a half."

"Really," said my father. "How time does fly—it seems to me but as yesterday that you were born. Well, we need not think any more of all this to-day; I shall make the requisite inquiries, and talk the matter over with you again shortly."

I left my father's study with a heavy heart. Though I passed by the threshold of Sophia's schoolroom, I could not bear to cross it. I rushed into the gardens, but they were in the glowing beauty of an afternoon in June, and I grew sadder still at the thought that I might so soon be called away from this lovely and beloved scene. Running rapidly down to the lake, I sprang into my fairy frigate, which my faithful Richards had thoroughly refitted, upon my late return, and sailed far on the bosom of the mimic ocean before me. When I stood alone there, with none to look on, and nothing but the bright expanse of waters around me, my head sank with my heart, and I burst into an agony of tears.

I had not deceived my father, my choice had been long since decidedly and irrevocably made; but now that the die of my future life was cast, now that the hour was come when I must depart a voluntary exile from Elmswater and from England, to rush upon all the trials and perils of manhood, my boyish fortitude for a moment gave way. It was, however, but for a moment. As my face lay buried in my hands, upon the gunwale of my boat, I fancied I saw the inspired eye of Thornton again fixed upon me, with its usual expression of sympathy and encouragement: I thought I again heard his last word of farewell—*SELF-RELIANCE*! I raised my head, and soon the stormy sea of life, upon which I was about to embark, appeared again to me as calm as the sheltered and voiceless lake before me; the spirit of confidence and of resolution burned as bright within me as the summer sun, which was shedding its golden lustre around. I steadfastly gazed upon the uncertain future, and ardently exclaiming—"Yes, Thornton, I will follow your footsteps, as well as your precepts; what man can bear I will undergo!" I swiftly regained the shore.

In that hour, the bitterest pang of my parting was overcome, and when I met Sophia, I could again talk as composedly of my naval prospects as during my conversations with Thornton, when the day for action was yet so remote. It was not so, however, with my gentle cousin; her tears flowed fast when I informed her of my interview with my father, and her sorrow was allayed by nothing that I could say or devise.

"It is too sad, Edward," said she; "you are the only person, as yet, that I have ever loved, and who has really entered into my feelings and pursuits. What shall I do when you are no longer here?"

"Oh, you will soon forget me," answered I.

"Never, Edward, as long as I live."

"Make no rash promises, Sophia: life is long and varied in its course."

"Never! never! never!" exclaimed she, hiding her face in my arms. "I have said it to none but you, and would say it to no one else; but to you I repeat, never!"

It was not for more than a fortnight after this day, that my father resumed our former conversation. He then inquired if my determination was as firm as on the previous occasion. Satisfied upon this point, he told me that an old friend and schoolfellow of his was about to cruise in the Channel, with the command of a fine ship, and that this excellent officer would be very happy to take me with him. No better occasion could offer, if I myself felt ready to go to sea immediately, but the vessel must sail within a week.

This was short notice indeed, and, perhaps, my heart would have again given way a little, had I not, that very morning, received a letter from Thornton, the first that had reached me, for he was stationed in the Indian Ocean. As it was, however, the enthusiastic strain in which he spoke of his new life, and of his hope that I would not fail myself to embrace it, had most opportunely rekindled my own ardour. I answered my father that I should be ready and willing to start on the appointed day.

"You are quite sure, Edward?"

"Quite sure," replied I.

"Very well; I will myself conduct you to Chatham, and see you safe on board."

The ensuing days were full of sorrow. A melancholy misgiving too often pressed itself upon my mind, that ere long I would again sigh with unavailing regret for the tranquil scenes of my happiest years, and curse the hour when I had forsaken them for the rude wilderness without. Never did I more strongly or more sadly experience the force of the ties which bound my heart to the abode of my fathers, and the deep suffering with which alone they could be severed. Still, the conviction that I was taking the right course, supported me, and sustained my resolution.

The last day came; I cannot bear, even now, to think of the awful hour when I bade that fatal farewell. . . . Would that I had never gone, or never returned!

CHAPTER XII.

Farewell, my Spain, a long farewell, he cried,
 Perchance I may revisit thee no more,
 But die, as many an exile heart has died,
 Of its own thirst to see again thy shore.—BYRON.

ACCORDING to his promise, my father accompanied me to Chatham. When we arrived at the Crown Inn, Rochester, where Captain Trowbridge, my future commander, was staying, we ascertained that he was gone out for about an hour. Lord Arlingford, with great kindness, conducted me to the barracks, fortifications, and all those portions of the town which he conceived it might interest me to see. The noise, the bustle, the military and naval array which I thus for the first time beheld around me, impressed me with a deep feeling of awe, and I could hardly believe, that I was myself so soon to take an active part in similar proceedings. On our return to the hotel, we found Captain Trowbridge waiting for us, and he welcomed me very kindly as the son of his oldest and most esteemed friend. He dined with us, and as his ship, the Culloden, was to sail the next day, recommended that I should go on board early in the morning.

The rain was falling fast, and the wind blowing hard, when, at the appointed time, we put off from the dockyard in the captain's barge, to join the ship, which was lying about half a mile down the river. My father would not leave me until he had seen me on board, and then we parted. How desolate I felt when, leaning over the side of the gigantic vessel, I saw him re-enter the boat which was to convey him to the shore. On deck all was uproar and confusion. In a loud and peremptory voice, and in a language which I could not understand, officers were giving their orders to crowds of herculean seamen and marines, who were rushing to and fro, cursing in their turn numbers of strangers and women who, having obtained permission to bid farewell to their relatives in the ship, were still hovering about her. Stand where I would, I was in some one's way, and nowhere could I find a silent corner where I might rest my wearied head and recall my scattered senses.

The few questions I addressed to those around me received either no answer or one that was to me entirely unintelligible; and during the whole morning I remained in this forlorn situation, till at last a young sailor, springing out of a boat which had just come alongside, approached me, and asked me if I was not Lord Edward Rockingham. Having answered in the affirmative, I received from him a note; it was written by my father, to inform me that the bearer was a nephew of old Richards, and that he was to embark on board the Culloden, where he might be of some use to me.

When I gazed at my new acquaintance, he appeared to me to be the very picture of a British sailor, tall, strong-built, with an air of singular good-nature combined with extreme resolution. He told me that he was serving on board another ship in the harbour, and that he was walking in the town when he had met Lord Arlingford in company with Captain Trowbridge and his own captain; that having occasionally seen my father at Elmswater, he had been recognised by him, and that some conversation having ensued, he had obtained permission to join the Culloden, which was more likely than his own ship to see active service. Young Richards, who had been several times at sea, explained to me many details with respect to what was going on around us, and thanks to his presence, I no longer endured that feeling of extreme loneliness which had oppressed and bewildered me during the earlier part of the day.

The unceasing efforts of the first-lieutenant had now succeeded in clearing the ship of all the strangers on board, and of all the boats which were hanging on around her, when about five o'clock the captain came on board in full uniform. He exchanged a few observations with the two senior officers, and then orders were given to weigh. Immediately, by the joyful sounds of the fife, scores of athletic sailors rushed to the capstan, and sprang into the tops and into all parts of the rigging; the breeze was fair, the weather fine again, and the Culloden glided majestically from her moorings amid loud cheers from the shore and from the boats around, heartily re-echoed by her gallant crew. It is a noble and inspiring sight to witness one of these floating citadels, the eternal bulwarks of the honour and safety of England, thus unfolding her giant wings, and starting upon her adventurous career; to see the thousand brave warriors, who have wedded their fate to hers, waving their joyous farewell to their native land. Think not then of the raging whirlwind, of the furious sea-fight, of the hopeless shipwreck; think not of the hundreds whom that gallant bark is bearing away, never again to return. On board all is confidence, all is gladness, all is hope. Why should we weep for those who, all unconscious of the morrow, are now so ardent, so reckless, so happy!

Long before we reached Sheerness, I was so led away by the spirit of the scene that my heart was in harmony with all around, and having been particularly recommended by the captain to the first-lieutenant, and by him to the midshipmen, I was received below with rather better grace than is generally met with under similar circumstances. We remained but a few hours at Sheerness, where none but the captain went on shore; we then proceeded on our course down the Thames, and were soon cruising far away in the Channel. The weather continued fair; the officers, though rather stern and reserved in their manners, were not uncivil to me, and I applied with such ardour to my new duties and studies, *that before the end of November I was perfectly conversant with all that was going on around me.*

Then the winter gales set in with more than their usual intensity,

and I began to comprehend the hardships of the life upon which I had entered. Still my courage was unabated; I was ever aloft, ever anxious to engage in any enterprise which could increase my knowledge and experience upon professional matters; and my excessive zeal, which at first had been rather derided by my younger shipmates, was now, not undeservedly, commended by all parties. My greatest pleasure was, giving a hand to everything connected with the management of the sails; when off duty, I often obtained leave to take my share in the proceedings of the top-men, and I soon held no contemptible rank among them for my years.

Towards the end of December we were one evening engaged in a short running fight with a French frigate, and we were struck in the rigging by several shots. I was a little staggered when I saw a fine fellow to whom I was transmitting an order from the main-top, absolutely cut in two by a cannon-ball, within a few yards of me. Upon the whole, however, I was reckoned to stand fire very well for the first time, and I felt an inward conviction, even from this slight experience, that my nerves would not betray me on more momentous occasions.

Soon afterwards we fell in with the squadron off the Spanish coast, under the command of Sir John Jervis. We reached the station in the first days of February, and great was my excitement when I beheld the gallant fleet with which we were soon destined to give battle to the enemy. Within a week after our arrival off Cape St. Vincent, Commodore Nelson's broad pendant was discerned, bearing the grateful intelligence that a noble Spanish squadron was close at hand. During the whole night the booming of their signal-guns was distinctly heard. So great was my exultation at the thoughts of the approaching conflict, that I could not sleep, and long before daybreak I was wandering on the deck, anxious to catch a glimpse of the foe.

When the sun rose, the morning fog was still so heavy that I could distinguish nothing, saving the British vessels hanging close together in a compact body—fifteen ships of the line and four frigates. Gradually, however, the mist cleared, and a splendid array of nearly thirty ships of the line and ten frigates became visible in the offing. They were much scattered, and a signal having been given to press on with all sail set, we were soon well among them. Nine of their ships were immediately cut off, and these, after exchanging a few broadsides, kept out of our way until much later in the day.

I had been ordered to do duty on the quarter-deck, where, a lieutenant having been killed and a midshipman wounded by the first discharges, the captain desired me to stand by him, and attend closely to the signals. As my sight was excellent I succeeded, notwithstanding the smoke, which now had risen in thick clouds on all sides, in performing this duty satisfactorily.

"A signal from the admiral, sir," said I, after a few minutes.

"Well, make out briskly what it is."

I was soon able to report that the order was to tack in succession

and fall upon the enemy's main body. This order was immediately obeyed, and we were bearing up to the Spaniards in a close line, when, as I was intently watching the ships to our rear, it appeared to me that one of them was wearing.

"Please, sir," said I, "there is one of our ships astern, which seems to be disregarding the signal."

"Are you sure?" answered the captain.

"Yes, sir," said I, after another minute inspection.

"Then I should not be surprised if she had a broad pendant at her masthead," exclaimed the captain.

"Well, sir, I think it is the commodore himself."

"Nothing more likely. Watch him well, and see what he is about."

In a few minutes I announced that Commodore Nelson was engaged, single-handed, with no less than five of the enemy's largest vessels.

"That will never do," said Captain Trowbridge; "I must support him at any risk;" and the Culloden wore in turn, and was brought close up to the Captain, upon which the impetuous Nelson was sustaining this awful conflict.

The renowned four-decker, the Santissima Trinidad, the Salvador del Mundo, the San Joseph, and several other first-rate ships, whose names were as yet unknown to us, were then pouring their fire into the devoted Captain; but, as if animated with the spirit of her commander, she was dealing destruction to all around with undaunted and unabating vigour. The Culloden was soon in the hottest of the struggle, and so enveloped were we in smoke, that nothing was to be done but serve our guns with the utmost rapidity and precision against the enemy which surrounded us on all sides. This was battle indeed, in its sternest mood, and with all its most soul-exalting circumstance! The shots, the bullets, the shattered spars flew about me in all directions, carrying away numbers of my brave shipmates; but maddened by the fierce spirit of contention, I stood as fearless as the gallant commander upon whom I was attending, and I saw, by his approving eye, that I had now fully earned his confidence.

For nearly an hour the deafening thunders of eight hundred pieces of artillery swept over the waters, bearing to the main body of both fleets their solemn report of the terrific encounter waged by this small detachment, on a space scarcely larger than was covered by the ships themselves. Then at last, through the white columns of smoke which were still arising upon all sides, we distinguished two vessels, under the flag of England, fast approaching to the rescue.

"Rockingham, try and make out what those ships are," exclaimed the captain.

"I think that first, sir, is the Excellent."

"Ah! I thought Collingwood would come as quick as he could.

What is the other?"

"I cannot make out, sir; but she has passed between us and the enemy, and has cut off two of them."

The first-lieutenant now came up, and reported that all the vessels engaged were getting ahead of us.

"Then press on," said the captain, "as hard as you can." But the lieutenant declared the ship to be so crippled as to be quite unmanageable.

"Well, that is indeed most unfortunate," rejoined Captain Trowbridge.

"We have done pretty well, sir," replied the lieutenant; "if it was not for you, I think that the commodore would be some little way under water by this time."

Soon afterwards I was enabled to state that the other vessel which had last come up was, to all appearance, the Blenheim. Just then the first-lieutenant, looking hard at me, exclaimed,—

"I say, young man, you seem to have had your share of it."

"I endeavoured to do my best, sir," replied I, not understanding his meaning.

"Are you suffering much pain, my boy?" inquired the captain.

"No, sir, not at all."

"He don't seem to have found out yet that he is wounded, sir," said the lieutenant.

I then for the first time put my hand to the side of my head, and when I withdrew it, it was covered with blood.

"Run down to the surgeon and get your hurt dressed immediately," rejoined Captain Trowbridge.

Obedying this injunction I descended, and remarked on my way that I was also struck in my chest by a splinter, but not very severely. As I was reaching the lower deck, young Richards, heavily armed, ran by me so precipitately as nearly to knock me down. Before he could make any excuse, I asked him where he was ordered.

He answered that he was to go on board the Captain immediately with a boat.

"Then I will slip in with you," exclaimed I; "I will see this gallant commodore to-day, though I should be shot for it to-morrow;" and so great was the confusion, that I accomplished my purpose without attracting observation.

When we shoved off, we saw that the Captain lay close alongside of two Spanish vessels, and that her men were rushing from all parts of her into the nearest of these. Our lieutenant made for this vessel, guessing that the commodore would be there in person; and just as we reached her quarter-deck, we saw the Spanish ensign hauled down, and ascertained that she was the *San Nicholas*.

Our men were soon in full possession of every part of the prize; but now murderous discharges of musketry were opened upon them from the stern-gallery of the neighbouring ship.

"Miller, get more men over here," cried an officer, small and slight in stature, but whose eye burned with the fire of genius and of command.

"Do you know who that officer is?" said I to Richards, who was near me.

"That is Commodore Nelson himself," replied he.

While I was thus gazing at this personage, whose name was already spread far and wide through the fleet and in England, he passed hastily from two Spanish officers, whose swords he had received, and raising his own slight weapon over his head, exclaimed in a voice the shrill tones of which I have never since forgotten:—

"Now, my men, for the other ship. Westminster Abbey or victory."

I was irresistibly led to follow close upon the hero, and we were soon in the main chains of the enemy; but before we had reached her deck, twenty different voices informed us that she had surrendered.

"That will do pretty well, Berry," said the commodore to an officer standing close by him, and then looking at me with a strange, but not forbidding expression of countenance:—

"Who are you, young man?" added he. "You don't belong to my ship."

"No sir, I am from the Culloden."

"From the Culloden. How is Trowbridge?"

"Quite well, sir."

"That is all right. Have you got a message for me?"

"There is a note coming, sir, I believe, but my lieutenant has charge of it."

"So you have got the start of your superior officer," said the commodore, with a smile of some meaning. "Well, I have heard of such things being done before. When you go on board again, tell Trowbridge that you have taken a three-decker. And, I say, better see the surgeon on your way, for you seem hit pretty hard."

Just then my lieutenant came up, and delivered our captain's note, to which the commodore merely returned a verbal answer, and we withdrew, the lieutenant more than ever convinced now that I had received orders to come on board with him.

Ere we again reached the Culloden, I began for the first time to feel some pain from my wounds. When they were dressed by the surgeon, I ascertained that the hurt in my head, though rather deep, was of no consequence, but that the splinter-wound in my chest was more serious. It was several days before all the fragments could be completely extracted, and so great was the irritation, that it was nearly a month before I could bear my usual clothing, or return to my duty.

During this time, the Culloden, which had been very much damaged in the action, was repairing and refitting at Gibraltar, where all who had been engaged in the late encounter were most enthusiastically welcomed. While there, we received the gratifying intelligence that the commodore, whose share in the late victory had been so conspicuous, had been promoted, and had received the Order of the Bath. When we were again ready for sea, we cruised for a short time in the Mediterranean, and having returned to Gibraltar, received orders to join the detached squadron, which, under Sir Horatio Nelson, had just sailed for Tenerife. The

winds, however, were unfavourable, and we did not join the admiral until the 23rd of July. We learned on arriving, that a first landing on Santa Cruz had been attempted on the night before, and that the attack had completely failed, but that it was likely to be immediately renewed.

So soon as we had reached the detached squadron, I had been ordered to go on board the *Theseus* with despatches for the admiral, and to say that my captain would wait on him within half an hour. The first person I saw on the deck of the *Theseus* was Nelson himself, engaged in an animated conversation with two other naval officers. After some questions respecting our voyage, the admiral was proceeding to open his letters, when looking hard at me, he said :—

“Surely, youngster, I have seen you somewhere before?”

“Yes, sir,” replied I, very proud of the recognition; “we met on board the *San Joseph*.”

“Ah, to be sure! so we did,” rejoined he. “What is your name?”

“Rockingham, sir.”

“Rockingham! Are you any relation to Lord Arlingford?”

“I am his second son, sir.”

“Indeed! He did me a good turn some years ago. I hope he is well. You are a fine little fellow, and will get on famously I trust. Tell your captain to come and dine with me to-day, and bring you with him.”

I accordingly came again at six, with Captain Trowbridge. The conversation turned exclusively upon the failure of the night before, and the chances of the forthcoming attempt. All present seemed confident of success, and none more so than Nelson himself. The wild enthusiasm which animated his voice and countenance carried my youthful ardour to its highest pitch, and while I in silence listened to the discourse of those around me, I internally vowed that, at all hazard, I would be present at the attack.

On the following day I was informed that all arrangements had been made on board the *Culloden* preparatory to the landing, but that in these, as I had apprehended, I was not included. An irresistible feeling impelled me to go up to Captain Trowbridge, notwithstanding my usual diffidence, as he was walking alone on the quarter-deck, and to express my respectful and earnest hope, that he would allow me to take my share in the forthcoming action.

He smiled, laid his hand on my head, and answering, “Most certainly not,” continued his solitary walk.

I was thus obliged again to have recourse to my friend Richards. I settled with him that I would endeavour to slip unperceived into his boat, which was likely to be much crowded, and so renew in this manner the experiment which had proved so eminently successful to me at the battle off Cape St. Vincent.

CHAPTER XIII.

No, no, no life :
 Why should a dog, a horse, a rat have life,
 And thou no breath at all ?—KING LEAR.

WITH a heart eagerly burning for the approach of the evening, I concealed, to the utmost of my power, my intended evasion, and even more than once stated to those around me, without any expression of regret, that I was aware I should have to stay on board.

About half-past nine, the boats were ordered out. The night was dark, and as Richards had let several fine tall seamen into our secret, I put off among them without detection. Our orders were to rally round the Sea-horse, where the admiral was dining with Captain Freemantle, and then to wait until he joined us, as he was determined to take the lead in person. While we were there, the lieutenant in command of the boat, who for some time had been endeavouring to put his crew into better order, suddenly exclaimed :—

"Now then, you fellows in the bow, don't keep crowding together there, as if you wanted the same shot to knock off all your d—d heads at once."

This order being obeyed with some hesitation, the officer stepped forward, and notwithstanding my best efforts, and those of my neighbours, he discovered me.

"What the h—l are you doing there, you young vagabond?" cried he. "You know very well that you have no business here."

"I understood," said I, endeavouring to put the best face I could upon the matter, "that I was to be in this boat."

"Don't talk such d——d nonsense to me. You know perfectly well that you were to be in no boat at all. I should like to make out of what earthly use you could be."

"Well, it is too late now, and we are too far from the ship to return."

"It is not too late to have you sent on board the Sea-horse, and put in arrest there: which I am d——d if I don't do."

"I won't go on board the Sea-horse; she is not my ship; you have no right to send me there," answered I, encouraged by the grin of delight which distorted the features of the honest seamen around me.

Just then, our dialogue was interrupted by the approach of a large and heavily-armed boat, on the stern of which stood a young lieutenant, of a slight form but most commanding air, who exclaimed :—

"I say, Arkwright, you seem to be in a state of great excitement. You will wake up the island, if you talk so loud, and make known our most secret expedition."

Arkwright answered in a few sharp words, but I could no longer attend to their purport. The appearance of the strange officer, as far as in the dark night I was able to distinguish it, his manner, and, above all, his voice, so powerfully arrested my attention, that I was standing absolutely motionless, when suddenly one of his men having addressed him by name, I could no longer doubt, and in a transport of joy, I cried :—

“Thornton, Thornton, it must be you ! Do you not know your old schoolfellow again ?”

“God bless my soul ! is that you, Rockingham ?” replied he, in a tone of the deepest surprise. “I had no conception that you were at sea,” and ordering his boat to be brought still closer alongside of ours, he shook me most warmly by the hand.

A fresh conversation here ensued between him and Lieutenant Arkwright, the result of which was, that Thornton obtained leave to take me with him in his boat, promising to put me back again on board the Culloden on our return,—“That is to say,” added he, “if we return at all.”

I was soon seated by him in the pinnace he commanded, and there, as for more than half an hour we conversed together, many a tale was exchanged between us in the affectionate tone of former days, with respect to all that we had gone through since we had parted at Ashton. I thus learned that Thornton had seen a great deal of service in the Indian seas, had lately been promoted, and was more zealously devoted than ever to his profession. I also found that his voice and manner had lost none of that magic charm which, from the first, had so invincibly captivated me.

“And so you made peace with Mrs. Wentworth, after all,” said he ; “I thought it would come to that when I left. How was she, poor creature, when you saw her last ? Was sorrow still preying upon her beauty ?”

“I thought her lovelier than ever, though she was paler, and her spirits were certainly more unequal. You knew more about her, Thornton, than I could ever persuade you to tell me at Ashton. Could not you be a little less mysterious now ?”

“Well, I suppose I may,” rejoined he, smiling. “The fact is, simply, that her father was for a short time the curate of our parish ; that a mutual inclination sprung up between my elder brother and her, but that my family most violently opposed any notion of marriage. Hence the asperity which her manner often revealed towards me, though I was, Heaven knows, entirely unconnected with the whole transaction. Poor thing, I fear that hers has been a sad lot, for she was formed by nature to move in a higher sphere.”

Insensibly our conversation led us back to the objects more immediately around us.

“Have you ever been in action before ?” inquired Thornton.

I mentioned to him in answer, but very cursorily, the running fight of the Culloden with the French frigate, as well as what had witnessed of the battle off Capo St. Vincent.

"I am glad that you have seen fire before," said my friend, "for we shall have some very rough work before to-morrow morning. Those who don't like to hear shots falling about them would have been more comfortable on board the Culloden in February last, than on that shore in an hour hence."

"Then you think," said I, "that we shall not succeed in surprising the town."

"In surprising that town!" exclaimed Thornton; "why, here we have been for the last forty-eight hours giving them every possible warning. Shall I tell you what will happen? When we shall be within pistol-shot of the shore, from that faint light which you can see there to the left, up to that other one at the corner of the Mole, such a fire will be opened upon us, as we shall not often face in the course of our lives; and then we shall have to land amid such a surf as you, I daresay, have never met with yet. This will be a night, indeed," continued he, in a lower and more thoughtful voice, "and one that will show who among us have a right to be called brave."

"And do you believe, Thornton, that the admiral is aware of all the perils of the undertaking?"

"None more so, but it is too late to retire now."

"And is he justified in exposing so many lives, with such a doubtful chance of success?"

"That is a great question," answered Thornton. "It certainly is unfortunate that the undertaking was conceived at all, but it would be a sad blow to the reputation of our navy, as well as to that of Sir Horatio Nelson himself, if we were to leave Teneriffe without making another attempt."

"So you think that now he is right to persevere?"

"There is not a man in the fleet who would not bear him out, and that at the peril of his life."

As we were thus conversing, some movement became perceptible among the boats which were hanging round the Sea-horse, and we could distinguish, by the solitary glimmering of one dim lantern, several officers in uniform descending and entering a heavy barge which was run alongside of her. The signal was then given to advance, according to the previous orders, and the whole of the boats moved on in silence with their utmost speed.

Thornton's voice and manner were now completely altered. The pensive and almost melancholy tone of his former conversation gave way to an expression of the liveliest animation and of the sternest resolution. The spirit of his men seemed in complete harmony with that of their youthful commander, and our pinnace shot swiftly on in the race. Suddenly, by the light of a struggling moonbeam, which pierced for a moment the dark clouds above us, we saw a boat, containing several officers, pressing hard upon us.

"G—d d—n you there," cried a shrill voice, whose northern accent I well remembered, "what do you mean by getting so far ahead? Fall back a little. I intend to land first, of course."

"Very well, sir," calmly replied Thornton, and he gave the required order to his men.

I endeavoured to conceal myself as well as I could, but my very boyish appearance again attracted the admiral's notice, as his barge passed close alongside of us, and not quite forgiving Thornton for having attempted to take the lead, he said to him rather sharply :

"Who on earth is that child you have got with you?"

"He is a great friend of mine, sir. His name is Rockingham."

"Rockingham!" cried Nelson. "Why, he is one of Trowbridge's youngsters. Surely, young man, your captain did not order you out to-night?"

"No, sir," replied I.

"Then how come you here?"

I answered, as a last resource, that I thought orders were not always required or obeyed in action.

A slight laugh here arose among the officers round Nelson, in which he finally joined himself, saying, however, that he had never disregarded a signal until he had been a post-captain.

Anxious to avail himself of this more favourable turn in the conversation, Thornton informed the admiral that I had been twice engaged before with the enemy, adding that his men would not fight the worse for having a descendant of the Rockinghams amongst them.

"Well, perhaps not," rejoined Nelson, "but try and keep him out of harm's way."

Just then the report of a gun from the shore was heard, and a cannon-ball came dashing along the waves not many yards from us. Thornton touched my shoulder significantly, and we heard the admiral say, in a voice which betrayed a little disappointment, though nothing of despondency—

"Well, they are expecting us after all." And then, in a louder tone, he exclaimed—"Give way as best you can, my lads, and don't keep the boats too close together."

Loud cheers, which seemed to arise all around from the very bosom of the dark waters, immediately responded to this order of the undaunted commander.

I soon saw that Thornton's prophetic glance had not miscalculated the chances of the affray. Shot followed shot in quick succession, and as we pressed on near and still nearer to the shore, lights gleamed on all sides, the alarm-bells resounded, and heavy discharges of musketry supported the close fire of the artillery. Our boat was struck more than once, but received no very serious damage, and we were still hard in the wake of the admiral's barge when we reached the shore. Here again Thornton was right. The surge was furiously lashing the rugged beach, and two of our boats were staved in, and dashed to pieces. We succeeded, however, in getting alongside of the Mole, under which I sprang in time to offer my arm to the admiral, whose barge had been thrown back a little by the rough sea.

Nelson's touch was light upon my shoulder as he left the boat; but when on shore, he suddenly pressed so heavily upon me, that I could not bear his weight. I perceived that he rapidly passed his sword from his right hand to his left, and then, notwithstanding my utmost efforts, he fell to the ground.

In the utmost dismay I gazed at Thornton, who was standing close by me.

"The admiral is hit," whispered he, "and, I fear, rather hard. We must help to put him back into the boat."

"Mind that sword," muttered Nelson, faintly, as I raised the weapon, which had now fallen from his grasp, and replaced it in the barge.

"Here, Nesbit," said Thornton, to a young officer who was still there "better lay him in the bottom of the boat." And removing the silk handkerchiefs from their own necks, they proceeded together to examine and to bind up the wounded arm with the most affectionate care.

"I suppose the game is up for to-night?" whispered Nisbet, in Thornton's ear.

"No, by Heaven! I hope not," answered he. "Do you take the admiral back to the Theseus, and I'll lead on the men."

Scarcely were these words uttered, when, amidst the dark waters behind, arose a wild and piercing shriek, the death-cry of two hundred of our bravest hearts, hurled, by one fell shot, into their watery grave.

"What on earth can that be, Thornton?" whispered Nisbet.

"I suppose it must be the Fox going down; she was close astern just now."

Nelson here raised himself a little, and faintly said:—

"Never mind me, Mr. Thornton; you had better move on with the men, and try to support Trowbridge. Here, take that ensign; it is of no use here, and it will be safe in your hands." Then, in a still lower voice, he continued—"Shove off, Nisbet, and see if we cannot pick up some of those poor fellows of the Fox, and then set me down on board the Theseus."

"The Sea-horse is first, sir," replied Nisbet.

"No, not the Sea-horse," murmured the hero. "I can bring no account of Freemantle to his poor wife."

Thornton now took the flag, which, by Nelson's direction, young Nisbet had delivered to him, and landed again with me. He cast one look of intense solicitude upon the retiring barge, as it bore away our beloved commander from the fatal strand, and then turned to the men, who were now standing upon the quay in great numbers, evidently much dispirited by an incident so unfortunate and so ominous.

This was an awful pause indeed. All was darkness around, saving where the distant flashing of the enemy's musketry seemed to enclose us on all sides in a fiery circle of defiance; and ere we had scarcely reached the shore, the head and very soul of our enterprise was withdrawn from us. The firmest hearts were perplexed and giving way, and many an eye was turned towards the

boats as they leaped wildly in the roaring surf, evidently on the very brink of destruction. But now the inspired voice of Thornton was heard, as he ardently exclaimed:—

"Forward, my men. The island is ours if we do but keep together."

He moved swiftly up the Mole, and our brave fellows followed with a loud cheer.

"Let me carry that flag, Thornton," said I, "and you will be better able to use your sword."

"Well, keep close to me, and mind you don't drop the ensign."

"Not I," was my answer, as I rushed forward beside him.

The Mole was defended by dark masses of the enemy, whose unceasing fire dealt destruction among us, but nothing could resist Thornton's onslaught. Gun after gun was carried amidst loud shouts, and soon the whole battery was spiked. Our men, however, had fallen in great numbers, and when we reached the head of the Mole, heavy discharges of musketry from the houses which surrounded it rendered any further advance impossible.

"What is to be done now, Captain Freemantle?" said Thornton, pausing for a moment and addressing an officer who had just joined us. "'Tis sheer madness to attempt storming this passage with the few men that we have left."

"We shall hardly make a stand here, indeed," answered Captain Freemantle. "Thompson is wounded; poor Bowen is killed; perhaps we had better move back to the boats and attempt another landing a little lower."

"Some fighting is going on there to the left, I think," rejoined Thornton, after gazing very intently in that direction. "I suppose that Captain Trowbridge has managed to get on shore there, and we may yet be able to give him some assistance."

We were now ordered to move along the quay to the point where this engagement was going on. By the flashes of the artillery our small party was at times distinctly visible, and the enemy's musketry continued to tell upon us with much effect. Before we had proceeded more than two hundred yards from our landing-place, I heard Captain Freemantle whisper to Thornton:—

"I am hit very hard and must drop behind; take no notice of me, and move on."

"That will never do, sir, I can't leave you thus; lean on me, and I dare say we may find a boat not far off."

Happily one was soon discerned, and the wounded officer had just been removed on board, when a loud cry was heard, and a large party of soldiers and mulattoes rushed on to attack us.

"Shove the boat off," cried Thornton, from the shore, "and get her out of shot; we will keep these fellows in play."

"For God's sake, Mr. Thornton," exclaimed the gallant Freemantle, "come on board with your men; I will not start without you."

"Never mind me, sir. Do shove off or they may take the boat."

Some confusion here ensued, during which those of our brave fellows who had pressed on to attack and to detain the advancing

foe, were driven back upon us, and Thornton rushed forward to the rescue. He was soon engaged sword in hand with the assailants, and they were in their turn repulsed, when suddenly I heard him exclaim :—

“Rockingham, I can fight no more !” and he fell heavily by my side.

“Here,” said I, to a stout fellow close to me, “give me a hand, and we will get him on board that pinnacle.”

We bore him to the edge of the quay. The boat had just pushed off, but, notwithstanding the surf, Captain Freemantle insisted upon her being brought back.

The enemy was now pressing hard upon us with deafening shrieks, and the few survivors of our gallant band, seeing that the struggle was hopeless, leaped into the pinnacle or into the water. Two brave fellows, however, still lingered on with me, assisting in my attempt to remove Thornton : but one soon fell, shot through the head, the other’s arm was broken, and our united strength was no longer sufficient for our burden.

“Now then, young man,” shouted twenty voices from the boat ; “we can wait no longer. Spring into the water, and we will pick you up.”

I gazed at the lifeless body of my friend, but unable to endure the thought that he should lie there unprotected from our savage assailants, I threw, with my whole force, the ensign into the pinnacle, and entreated my countrymen to think no more of me.

No time was now to be lost. The enemy, who had been kept back for a moment longer by a sharp fire from the crew of our boat, had again advanced so far, that the foremost among them were actually attempting to detain her by force, with a long boat-hook, which they had picked up on the quay. This last effort was happily unavailing, and the pinnacle succeeded in getting fairly off.

The fury of the Spaniards was now turned upon me. I received on the head a severe blow from a mulatto’s club, and as I fell on my knees, still endeavouring to cover Thornton, several swords and bayonets were pointed at me, and one of the latter actually traversed my arm. But a young Spanish officer, who had now come up, ordered, in a fierce tone, his men to stand back ; and, having very politely required my sword, which I delivered, he invited me to accompany him, desiring at the same time the body of my friend to be raised and removed with great care.

I followed my protector through the narrow and intricate streets until we reached a long low house, which we entered together. Having shown me into a large room on the ground-floor, which appeared to be unoccupied, he called for a mattress. There we deposited the ill-fated Thornton, and I knelt over his inanimate form. Though, in the heat of action, I had seen many men hurried away to their last account, I had as yet had no experience of a *death-bed* ; I had never studied the first dread symptoms of *approaching dissolution*, the last fitful struggles of receding life. I could not, therefore, actually discern what was my comrade’s

condition, as he then lay senseless and motionless before me; but the deep sword-thrust in his manly chest, from which the life-blood was flowing in a stream I could not arrest, told a fearful tale and warned me that human skill might soon be unavailing. Could it be so indeed? Had our hearts been joined again, after four long years of separation, merely to be torn asunder thus and for ever!

Before I had been half an hour engaged in these sad reflections, the young Spanish officer who had saved my life returned with a surgeon, who very carefully examined Thornton's chest. As I saw, by the expression of this man's countenance that he thought very ill of the case, I did not venture to address any question to him, and he proceeded to dress the wound with much solicitude. This being accomplished, he poured a few drops of some cordial mixture into a glass of water, and administered, with my assistance, some of this potion to Thornton. His attention was afterwards turned to my arm, from which I felt much pain; but I was greatly relieved when it was dressed and supported in a sling. He then took leave of us, giving me to understand, as best he could, that I must take some rest.

But I could not sleep; all my thoughts and all my feelings were absorbed in the contemplation of the apparently lifeless form before me. For more than an hour I thus watched without detecting one symptom of returning animation. At length I noticed that Thornton moved slightly several times, and then, that with a greater effort, he attempted to change his position. I assisted him with my utmost strength, and while I was thus supporting him, his eyes very languidly opened. At first there was no recognition in his look, but sense and recollection gradually returned, and I heard him, in a low voice, utter my name.

Pouring forth my most heartfelt thanks to Heaven for this priceless blessing, I responded with frantic joy to the almost inaudible appeal. As the greater part of the potion which the surgeon had mixed was still untouched, I applied the glass to Thornton's lips, and he again swallowed a few drops. This slight draught appeared to revive him considerably; he raised himself upon his lowly couch, and, extending his hand to me, he said:—

"Rockingham, I fear that this has been a bad business. Have you had any account of Captain Trowbridge?"

"No," answered I; "but the firing was continuing within half an hour not far from here, so I think that he must have made good his landing."

"I trust so, Rockingham. It would not do to die on a day of defeat."

"Die, Thornton!"

"Ay," he rejoined, with a melancholy smile; "there was death for ten men, I should conceive, in that last sword-thrust."

"Oh! don't say so," cried I; "the surgeon was here just now, and he told us nothing of the kind."

"Perhaps he did not let you know all he thought. But after all, *Rockingham*, is not this what we longed for at Ashton, when

we used to gaze together on the distant ocean, and pray that, far away on its waves, we might some day find a noble and early death? How and where could we better meet with it than here, in this daring enterprise, and, as it were, under the eye of Nelson himself? Thank God! I am not unprepared; for when I left the Sea-horse to-night, I never expected to see her again."

The faint voice of my expiring companion seemed to glow with suppressed but more than earthly enthusiasm as he uttered these words. Never had its thrilling tones so forcibly spoken to every feeling of my soul, and for a moment my grief was lost in admiration.

Still, it was sad to witness this struggle between death and youth, and to see the destroyer advance with such rapid strides upon the noblest prey that he could covet here below. Thornton was then scarcely twenty, and well his approaching manhood had kept the promise of his schoolboy beauty. Never before or since that dread night have I seen a figure so graceful and commanding, features so exquisitely moulded, or a countenance more brightly illuminated with the diviner light of our nature.

And so this, thought I, is war, with its pomp, its pride, and its glory! One stroke from an obscure and unknown weapon can for ever annihilate the most cherished work of the Creator.

Thornton seemed again, as of yore, to fathom my innermost thoughts, for after a few moments' silence he whispered,—in a voice, alas! still more inarticulate than before,—

"Shed no tears for me, Rockingham. I am happy, and my friends should be so too. On your return to England, if you see my brother, thank him for all his unfailing kindness to me. Farewell—I am sinking fast—My wound, my wound! look to it, if you can."

Removing the cloak which covered him, I inspected the wound, and saw that the bandages had slipped aside, and that the blood was flowing fast. I succeeded, however, in again staunching it, and in readjusting the dressings, as I had observed them to be placed by the surgeon.

"Thank you," murmured Thornton; "I feel much easier now. Perhaps if I can sleep a little, I may still hold out."

He closed his eyes, and by the gentler and more regular heavings of his chest I conceived that he had fallen into a quiet slumber. Still, I watched over him, and followed, with the most intense care, every movement of his frame, and each expression of his countenance.

The first grey streaks of dawn began to appear through the open windows, but I still kept up my lonely vigils. Insensibly, however, it seemed to me as if the low, blood-stained mattress, and *the figure that now reclined so tranquilly upon it*, were no longer *the only objects upon which my view rested*. I fancied that I *could discern*, though dimly and imperfectly, our heavy landing-boats, the dark waves which were dashing around them, and the *armed seamen with which they were crowded*. Soon the *chair upon which I was seated* appeared itself to rock, as if borne on the

bosom of the restless billows. I conceived that I was again in the pinnace with Thornton, but the shore was still far away; we were worn out with fatigue, and he urged me to take some rest. I refused at first, but gradually my head dropped—it rested on the gunwale of the boat—my eyes closed, and I became insensible.

When I awoke next day, the morning was far advanced. I recognised the room where I had so ineffectually attempted to watch by Thornton's side; but I had been removed to the further extremity, doubtless by some friendly hand, for I was lying, carefully covered over, upon a small couch which was standing there. I rushed immediately to the mattress where my wounded friend had been placed. It was there still—but untenanted now; and close by it, resting upon two chairs, was a plain wooden coffin, apparently just closed.

I staggered back in the utmost dismay; but unwilling still to trust to the evidence of my senses, I ran to the door and called wildly for assistance. An old woman, who seemed to be a sort of upper domestic, hastened in upon hearing my cries. I earnestly interrogated her in French with respect to the fatal preparations before me; and, as far as I could understand her answers, they fully confirmed my worst forebodings. The coffin contained the young English officer who had been killed on the night before; and if any doubt were still possible, the lieutenant's hat and sword laid upon the bier would have sufficed to remove it.

CHAPTER XIV

Thou art beautiful, my love, as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem, terrible as an army with banners. Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me.—
CANTICLE.

HOBOR-STRICKEN at the weakness which had prevailed over my utmost resolution to watch all night by Thornton, I could not bear to make any inquiries as to his last moments, but kneeling beside that narrow coffin, in an agony of grief and remorse, I entreated the departed spirit to forgive my involuntary desertion. When my tears had flowed long and fast, I felt a little relieved, and observing in a corner of the room a British ensign lying with several arms, which had doubtless been captured from our men, I seized the flag and laid it upon the bier, close to which I resumed my seat.

My mournful meditations were soon interrupted by the entrance of a sergeant and several soldiers, who proceeded to remove the coffin. They expressed some surprise at seeing the flag lying there, and were preparing to restore it to its former place, when I arrested their hands. Finding my efforts to retain it unavailing, I had recourse to every species of entreaty; but my prayers were disregarded, and the ensign had just been torn away from my grasp when the officer who had saved my life the night before entered the room, accompanied by a young lady.

They approached me, and endeavoured to ascertain the cause of my distress; after which a short conversation ensued in Spanish between my preserver and his companion. As far as I was able to judge by the expression of their countenances, the former was explaining to her why I was so anxious that my countryman should be buried according to naval custom, with the national colours around him; and also how impossible it was that such a use could be made of this standard, which having been captured in action, must be preserved as a trophy.

The interest which the strange lady evinced in what was going on, emboldened me to gaze more attentively in her face. She was young, and extremely beautiful; but her beauty was not such as I had ever witnessed in England. Her olive-coloured Creole complexion was pure and transparent as her native sky. Her large dark eye reflected with an extraordinary rapidity and precision each fleeting thought or impulse of her mind; and there was a grace and a softness in every movement of her slender form which no art could imitate or teach. The first look that she fixed upon me seemed almost irresistibly to throw me at her feet, and kneeling there, in the wild excitement of the moment, I claimed her intercession as that of a patron saint.

She smiled, as if vouchsafing a more than human protection, and addressing me in French, though so slowly and incorrectly as to be almost unintelligible, she explained to me that I could not have that flag, but that if I would wait for half an hour she would make me herself a similar one, which I could apply to the required purpose. Much gratified at this promise, I abandoned my struggle, and the ensign was delivered to a soldier, with whom she retired.

The young Spanish officer who had accompanied her then approached me, and speaking in his native tongue, but as slowly and as distinctly as he could, endeavoured to persuade me that I must immediately accompany him to some other part of the town, where something very urgent and interesting was proceeding. Conscience-stricken as I already was at having suffered myself to be removed from the death-bed of the preceding night, I conveyed in answer, as best I could, to my preserver, my firm determination not to forsake the bier until the last mournful duties had been performed. The Spaniard continued to offer some remonstrance, the purport of which I never very clearly gathered; but seeing that my resolution was fixed, he finally shrugged his shoulders and retired.

In about half an hour, the strange lady returned, and presented me with rather a rude and hastily-finished counterfeit of an English Union Jack. Deeply grateful for the kindness testified by this simple act, I again knelt at her feet, and seized her hand, attempting thus to express my devoted thankfulness. She looked at me, smiled, then slightly blushed, and the slender hand was withdrawn; not, however, until I had raised it more than once to *my lips*.

The sergeant's guard, which had lately retired, now re-entered; the coffin was raised by four of the men; I closely followed them,

and the sad procession moved on. The Spanish lady appeared much shocked at seeing us thus proceed without any priest, and seemed to insist upon sending one to the ground; but as it was impossible for me to affirm that Thornton had expired in the bosom of the Roman Catholic Church, her objections were necessarily overruled.

When we left the house the sun was far advanced on his course; it was the hour of the *sicsta*; the narrow streets of Santa Cruz were deserted, and our passage to the cemetery without the town was uninterrupted. There, in a remote corner, we found that several graves had been dug, some of which were already closed, while others were expecting their occupants. By one of these the coffin was placed, and in silent woe I embraced it once more before it was to be removed from my sight. It was then lowered into the pit, the earth was thrown over it, three volleys were fired by the Spanish soldiers, and they prepared to retire.

My grief here returned with a fresh paroxysm; and now that every vestige and relic of him whom I had so dearly loved had been withdrawn from before me, I felt so utterly lonely and heart-broken that I could not recover strength to move away. It struck me as if I should find a sort of mournful consolation in resting, for a short time more, upon the very earth to which I had just consigned my schoolboy friend; and the Spanish sergeant, a noble-looking, grey-haired veteran, seemed himself to enter into my feelings. After recommending me once, by an expressive gesture, to accompany him back to the town, he shook his head with a melancholy smile, and calling away his men, he departed. I was much relieved when thus left alone, and reclining over the newly-closed grave, I abandoned myself entirely to my mournful reflections.

The sun, though already fast descending, was still intensely hot. I was not yet inured to its whole power, and my cap having been lost on the previous evening, I began soon to feel the fiery rays falling with fearful severity upon my uncovered head. I attempted to arise, but I was dazzled and bewildered by the burning light which sparkled and glittered all around. Then a ponderous weight seemed to press hard and still harder upon my temples. I made another effort to raise myself and to cast it off; but it bore me so heavily to the ground that I lost all powers of resistance.

* * * *

Where am I now? I have never before seen this long, lofty room, with the piercing radiance of the tropical sun forcing its way through the curiously-carved shutters, while the perfume of a thousand rare plants embalms the drowsy air with such a celestial fragrance! Surely in England the breath of the heavens does not glow thus, nor is the rude sea-air animated with the living buzz of the countless myriads of insects there without! This is not one of the chambers at Ashton, nor my small bedroom at Elmswater, nor the narrow berth of the Culloden. I am not ill, for I feel no pain; but why have I no wish, or no power to move?—why is my head so strangely bound?—why is my arm thus confined in a sling?

My arm?—I can remember now. Oh! what a thrill of agony ran through me when that dark Spaniard's bayonet was so furiously thrust into the quivering flesh! But that was close to Thornton's body, for surely I have seen Thornton again: we conversed together, we landed together, we fought together, and then.—It cannot have been a dream, or a vision! I saw his expiring form, I received his last farewell, I attended him to his lonely grave.

Oh! that sun. How fiercely it burns upon my naked head. It is approaching nearer and nearer, as if entirely to consume my distracted brain! Lay me down, in mercy, by that humble coffin, and cover me for ever with the scorching sand, for my reason, the life of my life, is gone!

I closed my eyes for a moment, but soon a low rustling sound was heard, as a light step glided softly down the long room towards me. Whose is that slight and graceful form? It is not Mrs. Wentworth's figure, nor is that her face, though, as yet, no one, saving her, has ever gazed upon me with such a look of intense and affectionate anxiety. This is no spirit, although the angels of heaven would not disclaim her. I feel the gentle pressure of her hand as she raises my head upon my pillow; I see the living reflection of her thoughts as our eyes meet. I hear her voice, as joyfully exclaiming, "*Ah! Santa Maria, mira!*" she casts one kindred glance towards the Heavenly Intercessor, who has at length listened and acceded to her prayers. I have heard that voice and seen that face before; but did we meet in the sober daylight, or did she flit before me in the love-dreams of my boyish slumbers?

"Who are you?" muttered I. "Are you an earthly and mortal being?—or are you not rather the celestial companion of my deathless bliss, in the bright regions of eternity?"

She whom I thus addressed, shook her head, as if scarcely gathering the purport of my words, and then, in the same imperfect French which I could now recollect having heard upon a former occasion, she asked me if I did not remember her, and the flag which she had made for me?

My wandering ideas now returned, and pressed in quick succession upon my mind. I must, thought I, have been wounded at Santa Cruz more severely than I had at first imagined, and have been removed to the house of this fair creature, who had, from the first, appeared to take some interest in my fate.

"I believe, indeed, that I have seen you before," answered I, in French, "and this little hand too. I recollect these sparkling rings and these fairy fingers. Let me detain them for a moment now, and they will remind me of all. I am at Teneriffe still, and our brave sailors are, doubtless, masters of the island."

"You are at Teneriffe," answered my companion, "but your countrymen are not, thank God, our conquerors. They have learned to hold Spanish valour in greater respect, and are now far away again, upon their element."

"Then," said I, mournfully, "the expedition has failed, and I am a prisoner."

She inclined her head in token of assent.

"Are there many here with me?"

"None," replied she. "A capitulation was signed by one of your captains, and all the other prisoners were immediately exchanged."

"The prisoners exchanged!" cried I, starting up in my bed. "Then who has ventured to detain here a British officer, in violation of so solemn an agreement?"

My fair visitor could not forbear smiling at my impotent vivacity, and then answered, in her most playful tone:—

"It is I myself, I fear, who am responsible to the English king for having deprived him of so experienced an officer; but for him, as well as for yourself, you are, doubtless, as well here as if you had been allowed to die of a *coup de soleil*, in the cemetery of Santa Cruz. At all events, you are now my prisoner, and must obey all my commands, the first and foremost of which is, that you remain perfectly quiet for the present, and let nothing distress your mind."

I could not but respond to the tender voice and manner of my gentle preserver. I again pressed her unresisting hand to my lips, and, promising the most absolute submission, I requested her to inform me, more particularly, of the circumstances which had led to my no longer unwelcome captivity.

She then fully explained to me how my life had been twice saved by her brother, Don José Gutierrez, nephew and aide-de-camp to the governor of the island. On returning about daybreak, on the morning after the affray, with a surgeon to visit me and my dying companion, Don José had found me asleep by Thornton's pillow, and had removed me to the couch at the other end of the room, where I must have slept for more than eight hours. He had afterwards endeavoured to explain to me, in vain, the terms of Captain Trowbridge's capitulation, and to induce me to join my countrymen, just then returning to their ships; but, disregarding his advice, I had insisted upon attending the funeral of the lieutenant who had been killed.

It was thus, that, according to the report of the serjeant, on his return from the cemetery, I had been found by the grave of my comrade, insensible, and in a burning fever. I had been then carried back in a litter to the house of my fair informant, at Santa Cruz, who having been lately married, now bore the name of Doña Dolores de Almanza, and I had subsequently been removed to her villa at Oratava, at the furthest end of the island, where I then was. At first, I had been very delirious; my fever had run so high that I had been bled several times, and my head had been bound in snow. I had however rallied within the last forty-eight hours, though it was on that day, the eighteenth since my attack, that I had first shown any indisputable symptoms of returning consciousness.

Our conversation was here interrupted by a deep voice, summoning Doña Dolores, from an inner chamber. She immediately ran to the door, and calling out with great eagerness, "Antonio, Antonio, come here, he is recovering," introduced her husband.

He was a sallow-visaged, dark-browed man, apparently nearly fifty. He approached my bed with great courtesy; asked me in English how I felt; and desired me, according to the phrase of welcome usual among his countrymen, to consider his whole house at my disposal.

Doña Dolores then rang for an old Mulatto woman, who appeared to have officiated about me as a sort of nurse, and they both together proceeded to dress the wound in my arm which, thanks to their care, was now fast healing. This having been ascertained, the nurse and Almanza withdrew, Doña Dolores sat down at my bedside, and our conversation was resumed as freely as her knowledge of the French tongue permitted.

I informed her, according to her desire, of my name and age.

"Not yet sixteen!" exclaimed she. "How can your family have allowed such a child as you to engage in this rude service, and to be exposed to fight with full-grown men?"

"It was my own wish," answered I, "to serve my country in this way; and all who desire to attain eminence in our profession, enter it at this early age."

"And have you no mother?"

"No."

"And no sister?"

"No, I have only an aunt, whom I do not like, and a cousin, whom I love as if she were my sister."

"Cousins do not love as brothers and sisters," replied Doña Dolores thoughtfully. "If you love your cousin and she loves you, and you both live, this feeling must, for good or for evil, exercise great influence over the destiny of each. Is she handsome?"

"Oh very!" replied I. "She has the loveliest face I have ever seen."

A cloud seemed, for one second, to cross the sunshine of Doña Dolores' eyes, as I uttered these words, and she continued:

"Is she fair or dark?"

"Dark," said I. "Her hair is nearly as black as yours."

"And is she as tall?" rejoined she, rising as she spoke, and displaying the full height of her graceful and commanding figure.

"As tall as you! Why she is not yet fifteen."

"Well, I was nearly as tall as I am now, when I was thirteen; but, to be sure, in your climate it is different."

"And may I inquire," continued I, "how old you now are?"

"I am just eighteen."

"And already married?"

"To be sure; that is nothing wonderful here."

"Then, doubtless, the person who came in just now is your husband?"

"He is."

"He seems much older than you."

"Nearly three times."

"And I suppose you love him very much?"

"Of course," answered Doña Dolores, smiling at the extreme freedom of my inquiries. "I love him as you love your aunt."

"I understand. Now can you tell me when you think that I shall be able to move?"

"Very shortly, I should hope; but we must wait till the surgeon comes, and he will say more positively."

"Pray tell me also what I am to call you?" continued I. "Señora de Almanza, I presume?"

"No, you may call me Dolores, and I will call you Edward. It is the custom with us among equals, and *cela n'engage à rien*."

"But what if I were thus to become too tender and too familiar?"

"Oh! you will think of your cousin, who is the handsomest woman you ever saw, and there will be no fear of your losing your heart."

"I did not say that she was the handsomest woman I ever saw," replied I. "She is not a woman at all."

"Well, but she loves you, and you love her; you have therefore no business to be making comparisons with other ladies, or reflections upon them. Besides, you have now talked enough for to-day. You must try and rest a little, and by to-morrow morning I trust that you will nearly feel yourself again."

Obedying this injunction, I bade Doña Dolores farewell, and closing my eyes, was soon buried in a deep sleep, which was not once broken during the whole night.

On the following day, early, I was visited by Don José, Dolores' brother, in company with the surgeon, whose report was so favourable that I determined to get up for a short time. When I arose, I found myself very weak, but the fresh air of the garden revived me, and the noble view it commanded forcibly recalled me to the blessings and to the enjoyments of life.

Señor Almanza's villa was situated on a gentle eminence, rising about a hundred feet above the sea, the tranquil and sheltered waters of which bathed the extremity of the grounds. Below extended the town and harbour of Oratava, as well as the splendid valley bearing that name; but the grand feature of the scene was the Peak of Teneriffe, majestically rearing its proud head so high that the eternal snows of its summit could defy throughout the year that sun whose rays had lately proved so nearly fatal to me. The garden, as well as the valley beneath it, was one mass of verdure and vegetation; and I recognised among the plants most profusely strewn all around, many of those which I had admired in my childhood as the rarest productions of the hothouses at Elmswater.

Doña Dolores soon joined me. She was much surprised at my admiration for the *geraniums* and *heliotropes*, which were springing up in every nook and crevice, and which she considered merely as weeds and parasites. Smiling at my ignorance, she taught me to distinguish by their Spanish names, the banana, the fig-t

the vanilla, and all the noble offspring of those truly fortunate islands.

"I know this one," said I, "it is a cactus. But why do you allow such a quantity of little grey insects to rest upon it; will not they injure the plant?"

"Oh!" replied she, laughing, "those are far more precious than the shrub itself. Just press one of them in your fingers."

I did so, and my hand was dyed with the purest and most brilliant crimson.

"Those are the cochineal," said Dolores. "We export them in great quantities."

"All here is beautiful, all here is precious!" exclaimed I. "This indeed is the earthly paradise of which we sometimes dream in our northern climes, during the few and fleeting hours illumined by the summer sun."

"We have always this weather here," replied she, "saving three or four days in the year."

But my thoughts had now wandered far from my gentle guide. The enchanting beauty of the scenery around recalled to my mind the glowing descriptions which, in earlier days, had inspired me with so ardent a longing to behold such a vision.—Alas! thought I, here are indeed the regions which Thornton so truly depicted; how little we conceived, when vowing to visit them together, that we should there meet in such awful circumstances, and with such a fatal issue!

"You are thinking of your cousin," said Dolores, fixing her dark eyes upon me.

"No, indeed," answered I, "not at this moment. I was reflecting upon the sad fate of the comrade and friend who was killed here."

Dolores listened attentively as I explained to her the origin and nature of my intimacy with Thornton.

"It is indeed a melancholy tale, and a great loss to you," replied she; "but there are other feelings than friendship, and you have so much to live for yet, that I cannot allow you to despond. We will take great care of you here until you are fully recovered, and then we must find some means of insuring your safe return to England and your *innamorata*."

"But," said I, "is there no indiscretion on my part in thus staying here with you, in whose eyes I can have no other recommendation than that of an unsuccessful enemy?"

"You need have no sort of hesitation," answered Dolores.

"There is not a family in Teneriffe which would not welcome you as heartily as we do, even though they were not in such circumstances as my husband, who is one of the richest traders of these islands."

The kind and constant attentions I met with from all Dolores' family, as well as from herself, removed any scruple I might have felt at becoming their guest. I was, therefore, soon quite at my ease with them; and thanks to their care and hospitality, within *two months* my health and strength were completely restored.

I found Señor Almanza very courteous in his manner, but he was evidently much absorbed with his commercial affairs, and was generally absent during most of the day, either at Oratava or at Santa Cruz. As to Don José, he was so constantly in attendance upon his uncle, the governor, that he very rarely visited us. I was therefore alone with Dolores during most of the time, nor could I regret our seclusion, so fully did her gay and animated conversation enliven the fast-flying hours. She insisted upon my learning Spanish. It was no great merit of mine if, with such an instructress, I made rapid progress; yet so delighted and amazed was she with my proficiency, that each day she pursued her task with greater zeal.

Doña Dolores had a lovely voice, and though by no means a scientific musician, she could sing with infinite grace and charm a great variety of Spanish airs and ballads. These she also required me to learn; and I found no other means of testifying my gratitude than by endeavouring to approach the unrivalled tenderness and passion with which she rendered each sentiment and each expression of her national lays. The music, the scenery, the language, the beauty of the dark-eyed enchantress herself, seemed all blended in one celestial harmony; nor is it surprising that there, and with her, I should fast have forgotten my sorrows, my profession, my country, and my home.

I did not, however, neglect to write to my father, informing him of my safety, and of my intention to return to England as soon as an opportunity offered. This letter Almanza undertook to forward for me, warning me at the same time that the intercourse of the island with Europe being, in consequence of the war, almost entirely interrupted, the occasions he could command were very rare, and above all, extremely precarious.

CHAPTER XV.

Q.—And must we be divided? Must we part?

K.—Ay, hand from hand, my love, and heart from heart.

K. RICHARD II.

I HAD observed from the first that Almanza and his wife did not live on very friendly terms. His manner to her was deferential, but cold, and occasionally rather sarcastic, and hers was at times reserved and haughty in the extreme. Differences would but too frequently arise between them, and then it was sad and fearful to see how fast the fire of her Arabian ancestry would kindle in the countenance of the fair Andalusian, and to mark the ferocious scowl that would still more deeply darken the swarthy brow of her husband. More than once, from the garden or from a neighbouring room, I could overhear the fierce words of altercation running high between them when I had withdrawn, the stern injunction on one side, the proud and determined defiance on the other. One day Don José, who had ridden over from Santa Cruz, was appealed

by both parties, and I could perceive that he gave his full assent to the opinions of his sister, deriding even, with some asperity, those which Almanza had expressed. Though I could not well gather the purport of the discussion, I not unnaturally feared that it might in some way have been connected with my prolonged sojourn at Oratava, the more so that the manners of my host, ever perfectly courteous, made no nearer approach to intimacy. I therefore thought it right again to mention my scruples to Dolores, and even to allude to them with her brother; but both so cordially and so positively forbade me to entertain any such idea, that I could not but dismiss it from my mind.

As soon as I had felt completely recovered, I had requested Don José to procure me an opportunity of paying my respects to the governor, whose conduct during the late occurrences had been, as I was now aware, most noble and exemplary. I had since then frequently met Don Antonio Gutierrez, and had become a great favourite with him; so much so, that I one day received a letter from him, desiring me to go over and pass a short time at the official residence at Santa Cruz. I willingly accepted this invitation, the more so that no tombstone having been as yet erected over the spot where Thornton was buried, I felt particularly anxious to pay this last tribute of respect and affection to his memory.

When I mentioned to Almanza my intention of leaving his house, whether from natural civility, or that he was already prepared for the intelligence, his countenance expressed no other feeling than the regret which his words testified. He seized this opportunity of renewing, in the most pressing terms, a proposal which he had already made, of placing some funds in my hands for my more immediate wants. As the few pounds I had in my pocket could not carry me very far, I accepted this offer for a small sum, and was preparing to give my bill for the amount; but this he absolutely and positively declined to receive, so that I was constrained to rest satisfied with obtaining the exact address to which the value might be remitted when I returned to England.

The day having been fixed for my departure, I could not but remark that the very same was appointed by my host for a short voyage to Madeira, which he had for some time been projecting. Upon this his wife mentioned the idea of going over, during his absence, to join her uncle at Santa Cruz; but Almanza so strongly objected to any such arrangement, that it was decided she should remain alone at the villa.

Being determined to return to Oratava previously to leaving the island, and, indeed, entertaining, as yet, no settled plan of departure, I took leave of my new friends as if soon to meet them again. Almanza shook me cordially by the hand; as to Dolores, she merely added to the expressions of farewell usual on such occasions, her *smiling injunction*, not to forget my cousin whilst I was at Santa Cruz.

"There is no fear of my not remembering her there, if I have not forgotten her here," whispered I in answer.

"Indeed," said she, laughing at the deep blush with which

had uttered my attempted compliment, and I withdrew with the servant who was to escort me.

Nothing could be more obliging, and even affectionate, than the welcome I received from the governor of the island, Don Antonio Gutierrez. He was a gallant veteran, who had seen much service at home and in the colonies; and, as I began now to speak Spanish pretty fluently, I enjoyed very much his animated and interesting conversation. I did not forget my intention of erecting a small and simple monument to Thornton's memory; but before it could be completed, a malignant fever broke out in the household of Don Antonio, and he and his nephew insisted upon my returning to Oratava to avoid the contagion.

I would have preferred not becoming again a regular inmate of Almanza's house, particularly during his absence; but Don José would hear of no other plan than that of bringing me back to his sister's villa. When we arrived there, unexpectedly, great was the joy of Dolores, who had no hesitation in owning that she had found her solitude very tedious.

On beholding me she embraced me, calling me her child and her son, vowing that, until I left the island, I should reside nowhere but under her roof. Don José was obliged, on the following day, to return to Santa Cruz, so I thus remained alone with his sister.

And now the day-dreams of my dawning imagination, and the bright visions of my youthful slumbers were realized. I no longer retired early to my couch, that I might again see the fairy figures that watched over my enchanted sleep; nor did I seek the lonely solitude of the mid-day shade to commune with the creations of my fancy. A nobler and more celestial being, she whose approach my heart had long foretold, was now ever present, ever at my side. And yet the voice of passion was still unheard; and the deep devotedness which absorbed and entranced my soul, knew no other object and no other desire than to revel in the lustre of her eyes, and continually to contemplate that surpassing loveliness.

Indeed, so aimless, so hopeless, so deeply respectful was my admiration for Dolores, that she could feel no apprehension in the society of her boyish lover. I was a child in her eyes—as such I sat by her, I conversed with her, I followed her in all the details of her household transactions, and even within the sacred precincts of her dressing-room. In common with most of her countrywomen Dolores had little education and little knowledge—she seemed to live for life itself, ignorant of the past, careless of the future, gliding in the pride of her youth and beauty through the sunshine of her bright existence, like the gorgeous birds of her own garden.

Still, at times, the devotedness of my heart would find utterance in the majestic language which the enchantress herself had taught me;—but then, I never addressed her directly, and the impassioned words which I learned from her were but rehearsed, that I might repeat them to my cousin on my return to England.

"When she sees you again," said Dolores to me, as we were one day sitting together in the garden, *"she will expect from you of*

expressions of love and admiration than those you have as yet used. Do you mean to call her still my cousin, or miss?"

"No," said I, intently gazing on my interrogator, "I shall call her my beloved, my soul, my angel. If she, too, has learned Spanish whilst I have been away, how shall I thus address her?"

"You must say—*mi querida, mi alma, mi angel*."

"*Mi querida, mi alma, mi angel*," repeated I; "Is that right?"

"She would expect such words to be said rather more fervently," replied Dolores.

I laid my head upon her knees, which I frequently did when we conversed together, and gazing still more earnestly upon her, I again repeated the magic words.

"Dolores," said a deep and stern voice close behind us.

"My husband!" exclaimed she, springing to her feet, and then entirely unabashed, she moved forward to meet him.

Almanza bowed coldly to me, and retired into the house with his wife.

Though unconscious of any guilt, a strange sentiment of apprehension crept over me, which was much increased when, on approaching the house, I heard high words of desperate altercation from within.

Soon a piercing shriek rent the air. I could no longer forbear rushing into the drawing-room, and the first thing I saw on entering, was Dolores lying prostrate on the floor: her husband had struck her, and was preparing to repeat the blow.

With my utmost force I threw Almanza aside. Thus released, Dolores sprang up, flew to the adjoining room, and returned with a dagger, which I verily believe she would have used in the fury of the moment, if I had not arrested her arm.

"For Heaven's sake forbear," cried I. "What can be the cause of these fatal differences; surely you should both live peacefully and happily together."

"He has actually struck me!" exclaimed Dolores, gnashing her teeth; "the ruffian, the coward, to raise his hand against a woman!"

Almanza's resentment burned not less fiercely, in his looks; but he had more self-possession, and he exclaimed:

"I am sorry, sir, that you should be here to witness this unfortunate scene."

"The señora will have explained why I am an unwilling, but not an unbidden, guest in your house during your absence."

"You misunderstand me," he rejoined, and retired abruptly to his own room.

"What can have been the cause of this deplorable dispute, Dolores; for Heaven's sake tell me, had I not better go? How easily I can retire to Santa Cruz."

"If you think of going there, if you so much as dream of leaving this house, I shall never forgive you, I shall hate you."

"But do tell me, have not your husband's reproaches some connection with me and my stay here? I have, as you know, long apprehended it."

"I should like to know what business you have to inquire into

these matters," replied she, smiling; and then, recovering her usual good-humour, she continued:—

"This is my house, and all whom I choose to invite shall come here, and stay here as long as they please, and as long as I please; and as to my reputation, it is quite safe in my own keeping. Now let us go back together to the garden."

Her former lively and careless manner soon entirely returned; and had I not remarked that she concealed her dagger in her bosom, I should have thought that all the incidents of the late quarrel were forgotten.

Don José came shortly before supper for the night. His presence tended to keep up the conversation on more friendly terms, and I seized an opportunity of saying, so as to be heard by all parties, that I would on the following day ride back to Santa Cruz with him.

Late in the evening Dolores approached me and said: "Remember that I expect you back here to-morrow evening. I have my reasons, about which you need not inquire. You owe it to me to comply with this injunction, and I feel sure that you will."

I did not fail to promise obedience, determining, however, that I would retain a room in the hotel at Santa Cruz, where I would shortly take up my abode until I had an opportunity of quitting the island.

When I arrived in that town on the following day, I found that the little monument which I had ordered for Thornton was completed, and nothing now remained but to have it placed over his grave. So slow and dilatory, however, were the Spanish workmen that this could not be accomplished until very late in the day, and the shades of night were falling fast before I could again be on the road to Oratava. I had ridden for about an hour, when I met with a man, enveloped in a cloak, who asked me, with great courtesy, if I could tell him the exact time.

I stopped to make my watch strike, for it was too dark to see. Just then, the stranger raised his hand and the cold steel of his dagger pierced my chest. It was fortunate that, having in my conversations with my shipmates on board the Culloden, learned an extreme, and perhaps, unfair distrust of all foreigners, I had on this occasion, as on many others, very attentively watched the movements of my interrogator. I was, therefore, able to thrust up his arm in such a manner as not entirely to avert the blow, but very much to change its direction.

Striking as hard as I could the assassin on the head with my riding-whip, I set spurs into my fleet barb, which bore me quickly away over the stony road. Miles and miles flew swiftly by, and the night was not very far advanced when I reached Almanza's villa. He was smoking in the garden as I entered, and I was welcomed by Dolores alone. She thanked me and praised me much for my attention to her wishes; but the smile of her beaming face gave way to an expression of deep horror, when I threw aside my riding cloak, and she exclaimed, in the greatest alarm:—

"*Ah, Jesu Maria! what is this? You are covered with blood.*"

Just then Almanza re-entered, and I recounted my adventure as it occurred. Both appeared much surprised; but there was more in Dolores' look than her words revealed.

The old mulatto nurse, who had before attended me, was now summoned, and she carefully examined the wound in my chest. It turned out to be as I had conceived, a long and not very deep cut, the assassin's dagger having been averted by me from the horizontal direction in which the thrust had been made. Congratulating myself at having, by my presence of mind, saved my life, and satisfied that the old woman's skill would soon heal my hurt, I was preparing, after a first application of lint, to re-adjust my dress, when Dolores exclaimed:—

"What are those other deep scars so near the heart?"

"I must not tell you," said I, "where I received those wounds. You know that it is my fate to be always your enemy."

"I suppose then," answered she, "that you were also wounded at the battle of Cape St. Vincent. Poor child! how your cousin will love you!"

Almanza pressed me so much to stay a few days at the villa, until I was completely recovered, that I could not refuse.

On the following morning I was again alone with Dolores. "You had not told me," said I, "that you had robbers in the island."

"I never heard of any before."

"Well, it was hardly worth this man's while to make his *début* upon me: a midshipman's purse is but a poor prize."

"And if it was no robber at all, Edward?"

"No robber! Then it must have been some private enemy, and surely I can have none here."

She looked up at me, as if so much amazed at the simplicity of my words, that I could not but add:—

"I mean no personal enemies; for of course I do not think any inhabitant of this island capable of attempting to injure me, merely because I am a stranger and an Englishman."

"No, indeed, I trust not," replied she.

"Well, at all events, Dolores, I hope he won't begin again."

"I think I can answer for that," rejoined she. "He knows full well that his life would now answer for it, were a hair of your head to be injured."

"Why how is this, Dolores?" said I, in great astonishment.

"You speak as if you knew who this villain is!"

"Yes, Edward; the head that planned this foul deed—not the base mercenary hand that was to execute it. But never mind that. You must prepare to quit this island, for though I trust that I can protect you, and am certain that I could avenge you, still, your life is scarcely safe here, and I should never forgive myself *did you meet with any more serious injury*. When do you think *that you can go*? You must have been here now for several months."

"Indeed I have, Dolores; but time has fled so swiftly, and *happily*, that I have kept no account of its progress. I believe *that no passage for England, of which I could well have availed*

myself, has been heard of since my recovery, though I must admit that I have not very diligently inquired. Much as I wish to reach my native land again, I have been well satisfied to remain on here, nor indeed did I expect that I should be reminded by you of the duties that may call me elsewhere."

"Look here, Edward," answered Dolores, fixing her speaking eyes upon me, with a look of solemn and almost maternal tenderness; "were you a man, and not a child, and were your heart free, what might have occurred, what might still occur between you and me, Heaven only knows. As it is—and I thank the Holy Virgin, my protectress, that it is so—it would be very madness for both to run the awful risks to which we are now exposed, with no serious object in view. I am thinking more of you than of myself, in offering you this advice; and if ever you reflect in future days, upon what I am now saying, you will understand the sacrifice I am making, and approve me for it. But now we must—must part."

"Dear, cherished Dolores," exclaimed I, seizing her fairy hand, "my preserver, my guardian angel, I feel that I must obey you; but I—I will ever love, and ever respect you. As long as life and memory endure, your kindness and your image can never be effaced from my heart."

She pressed her lips to mine once, and once only, and then raising her forefinger with a gesture of tender admonition:—

"Enough, Edward," she said, "you must not forget your cousin nor I my—my duty. We have passed a happy, happy time together; too happy to last for ever. What my feelings for you may be, or may remain, you need not inquire. But yours towards me will, I am sure, be such as you describe them. Many will love you who will have more claim to your affections than I; but I have been your first love—I mean your first woman-love; that is a rank of which none can deprive me, and which will often recall to your heart your absent Dolores. Now let us change the subject."

"There is one point, at all events, to which I shall always bear witness," answered I; "it is the earnest manner in which you have ever adjured me to be faithful to my cousin. I shall thus be able to repel many a calumny directed in England against your countrywomen."

"What do they say of us there, Edward?"

"Why, that you are not very constant wives."

"You may say that we are always faithful to those we love," said Dolores, smiling, "and be so likewise."

"Well, Dolores, in acknowledgment for my obedience to all your injunctions, will you answer a few questions which I have long been anxious to make?"

"I will, Edward, if I can in honour. What are they?"

"Then pray tell me whether your differences with your husband have not related to my stay in your house?"

"Sometimes, but not always."

"And can it be possible that he was jealous of me?"

"He was, indeed. Not that he actually ever positively thov

that I had given him any serious cause, but because he was mortified and annoyed at seeing me bestow so much——" she paused for a moment.

"So much affection, Dolores," said I, seizing her hand.

"No, señor," replied she playfully; "but so much attention and time on so undeserving an object, in which, after all, I believe he was quite right."

"Then, Dolores, why did not you comply with his wishes, and allow me to depart?"

"Because I like doing what I please, and not what pleases other people; and because I did not choose they should say that there had been an *esclandre* here on account of such a personage as you. It will be time for you three years hence to be engaged in such matters."

"Well, but one question more. You positively know who planned the attempt upon my life. Will you tell me, or will you leave it for me to guess?"

"You must neither guess nor inquire, nor give another thought to the matter," cried Dolores, pressing her slender forefinger upon my lips. "As you love me, you will remember this. Can I rely upon you?"

"I do not know, Dolores, except you possess some other secret for insuring my silence."

She bent over me, and her own lips replaced the finger she had just withdrawn from mine.

When I returned to Santa Cruz, I studiously inquired how I could best take my departure for England. I heard that, on the very day after that upon which I had received my last wound, a vessel had touched at Santa Cruz for a few hours, on her way from the Philippines to Cadiz; but such an occurrence was now very rare, in consequence of the vigilance of the British cruisers. My heart sank sorely at the thoughts of leaving the island, but I felt it more than ever incumbent upon me to do so speedily, in consequence of my last conversation with Dolores, to the purport of which Don José himself now fully assented.

I settled, therefore, that I would wait two months longer at Santa Cruz, in the hopes that some other vessels bound for Europe might appear, and that if none were to come during that space, I should embark as best I could for Madeira, from whence surer and more numerous occasions might be found. With this view, I took up my residence in the hotel at Santa Cruz, and as I occasionally rode over to Oratava, and Dolores frequently came to see her uncle, we constantly met.

When the appointed time was at hand, I made an arrangement with the owner of a large fishing-boat, to have the use of his vessel as far as Madeira; and thanks to the liberality of the governor, I was enabled to satisfy his claims, to repay the money which *Almanza* had advanced, and even to carry away with me a sum sufficient for my probable wants until I should reach my home.

The fatal day fixed for my departure came at length. It found me at Oratava, where I had been very pressinglly invited to pass the

last forty-eight hours. As Dolores had shown herself particularly anxious, since my recent adventure, that I should never be out after nightfall, we had determined that I should start early in the morning for Santa Cruz; but the parting was more painful and more difficult still than we had supposed; the sad hours flew swiftly by, and the sun was fast descending, when I was warned by Don José, who was to accompany me, that he could wait no longer. I shook hands with Almanza, and bearing in mind his wife's admonitions, thanked him repeatedly for his kindness, as if no suspicion or misgiving had ever crossed my mind. Dolores was present to the last; she conversed with the greatest composure; and when at length I turned to her, she kissed me on the forehead and bade me adieu with a calm and almost unconcerned voice. Though surprised at this farewell, I did not the less deeply feel the anguish of the moment, and was happy when, mounted on one of the governor's best horses, I was borne rapidly away from the cherished abode of happiness that could return no more.

Before we had proceeded a couple of miles, we were overtaken by a horseman at full speed, who, after exchanging a few words with Don José, continued his journey with us.

"He is a friend of mine," said my companion, answering my first inquiry in such a tone as to lead me to suppose that a second would be reckoned indiscreet. The new-comer was so completely enveloped in his riding-cloak, and covered by his wide sombrero, that I could neither distinguish his features nor his form; I could only see that he was most slightly built, and not very tall. He appeared to be apprehensive of some incident, or some unpleasant rencontre, for he was continually ahead of us, and intently watching the road. Nothing, however, occurred to impede or retard our progress, and before midnight we were safe in the governor's residence. Both he and his nephew now pressed me much not to leave the island that night; but feeling that I must see Oratava and Dolores no more, I conceived that it would be a relief to my sorely-wounded heart if I were farther from the spot which was hallowed by her presence, and I requested my kind friends not to oppose my departure.

They accompanied me to a small vessel, and the governor having bid me farewell on the quay, Don José alone followed me on board. There I again saw the strange rider, who had joined us on the road from Oratava. The hat was raised, the heavy cloak thrown open, and the arms of Dolores were clasped round my neck.

"Ah! *mi querida*," I exclaimed; "I was sure that your cold farewell at Oratava was not to be the last."

"No indeed, Edward, I was determined to see you safe on board, and to embrace my son once more—thus—thus. It is for this that I have ridden so far. But that must do now—we have nothing more to say to each other, except we cling together for ever."

What would then have been the answer of my despair, I know not. But anticipating that which would probably have flowed from my lips—"No, no," she continued vehemently, "I have s

strength and sense enough left to save us both," and tearing herself from my embrace, she sprang lightly to the shore. Don José now approached me, and we parted with many mutual professions of friendship and esteem. The sails were set, the wind was fair, and the forsaken elysium fast receded into the night-shade of the dark horizon.

Again a voluntary fugitive from happiness! Again abandoning the blissful shore to intrust my frail bark with the boisterous and heartless billows! As I have looked back at times on my bygone life, I have wondered how I have found sufficient force thus, more than once, to rend asunder the heart-strings that have bound me to the beings and to the scenes which I have most loved. Some unknown destiny more powerful than all that I could will, or decide, or accomplish, has ever thus, in each more critical hour, impelled me fatally onward. I have struggled against the rude gale, and against the fitful tempest; but when the giant breath of the hurricane has swept over my path, where were my courage, my skill, and my boasted strength? I have closed my eyes, and he has borne me irresistibly before him, hurling me without a struggle into the dark abyss of futurity.

CHAPTER XVI.

Thou dost arise,
And shake him from thee. The vile strength he wields
For earth's destruction, thou dost all despise,
Spurning him from thy bosom to the skies.—BYRON.

OUR short voyage to Madeira was not so easily accomplished as we had expected. On the following morning, the wind and the sea rose, the waves dashed fearfully into our slender bark, and it was perhaps fortunate for myself and my companions that I had seen some not very dissimilar service in the boats of the Culloden, during the winter I had passed off the coast of France. In time, however, and before our provisions had quite run out, we reached Funchal.

The letters I had received from the governor of the Canary Islands for the authorities insured me a very kind welcome, and though delayed much longer than had been contemplated, I could not regret that my stay was prolonged in so charming a residence. The scenery, the vegetation, the sky, all forcibly reminded me of Oratava, and Dolores was ever present to my mind.

At last a Spanish vessel arrived, bound for Corunna, and the French cruisers being then as active in the neighbourhood of Madeira as the English about Teneriffe, it was deemed more advisable for me to seize this opportunity of approaching, by so much, my native land, than to linger any longer in the expectation of some more direct but equally precarious passage homewards. I therefore embarked on board the *Felicidad*, a heavy three-

master, which appeared already to have seen a great deal of service. I could not say quite as much for the crew or for the captain, neither of whom seemed to me to be very highly qualified as seamen.

The day after we left Madeira, the wind shifted to the eastward, the weather became very stormy, and it soon struck me that we were getting far off our course. I mentioned this to the captain, who desired, in consequence, the ship to be kept closer hauled; but it was too late, and one morning the whole of the party, except myself, were very much startled at seeing a high line of shore stretching out to leeward. This I immediately pronounced to be one of the Azores; and after some discussion and sundry exclamations of astonishment, my opinion was universally admitted. No time was lost in wearing; but before we had been many hours on our new tack, a fresh subject of apprehension arose from the appearance of a strange vessel to windward, bearing down fast upon us.

"That looks very like a man-of-war, captain," said I, after having attentively examined her with his telescope.

"Ah, *Caramba!*" exclaimed he. "God grant it may not be one of your countrymen. I will keep away as much as I can."

There was no help for it, however: the *Felicidad* was no match for the new-comer. Within half an hour her colours were visible, and I recognised the flag of England. A couple of shots, one across our bows, and the other in our rigging, warned us that a British vessel was not to be trifled with. Nothing was to be done but to heave-to, and to receive as civilly as circumstances would admit, the lieutenant, who came on board to take possession of the ship. While closely examining her and her crew, this officer's attention was arrested by my appearance, and he inquired who I was. The captain leaving me to answer the question for myself, I felt unwilling to say too much until I had seen something more of my new acquaintances, and I merely declared myself to be an English gentleman, taking my passage from Madeira on my way homewards.

Upon this, the lieutenant very civilly requested me to accompany him on board his ship. I complied with his wish, and ascertained that she was the Bengal frigate, going out to the West Indian station. My new acquaintance introduced me to his captain, a good-natured, weather-beaten old sailor, who immediately expressed his regret at the delay which that morning's adventure must cause in my voyage. By the conversation which took place very unreservedly before me, between the lieutenant and him, I saw that they were much perplexed to know what to do with their prize. Their orders being to proceed immediately to their station, they did not feel justified in altering their course; and two midshipmen having been lately disabled from service by a serious accident, they had no officers, and indeed no men to spare, who might be left in charge of the captured merchantman.

"We might take the crew on board and burn her, if you thought fit, sir," said the lieutenant.

"Why, you see," answered the captain, "I do not much like

wantonly destroying private property; that benefits nobody. It is really unlucky that we have no hands whatever to spare."

I had not been an inattentive listener to this dialogue, and I now thought it fit to declare to the captain what my real position was.

"Are you, indeed, Lord Edward Rockingham?" said he. "Why, you have been reported first among the missing, then among the killed at Teneriffe, and you will find your family in great anxiety about you when you return to England. I really should be glad that you got back to them as soon as possible. What do you say about this business?"

"Well, sir," I replied, "as you are so good as to wish for my opinion, I shall take the liberty of suggesting that you should let the vessel go: she is not good for much, nor her cargo either. She belongs to her captain, who is a poor devil, trading on his own account, as he has told me, and who has nothing in the world, saving what is on board. I daresay he could find a few dollars for the ship's company, if you let him off; and as to me, it would, indeed, be an immense convenience if I could proceed with her on my voyage."

After a short consultation, the captain agreed to my view of the matter; and when I had stayed about an hour with my countrymen, they reconducted me to the *Felicidad*.

No words could express the ecstasy of the Spanish captain when informed by me of this new turn in his fortunes. He threw himself into my arms, and actually wept for joy, as he proclaimed his eternal gratitude for my unexpected protection. I did not conceal from him that I should not consider it unbecoming were he to offer to the crew of the *Bengal*, if in his power, some slight indemnity for their disappointment. He immediately ran below with great alacrity, and returned with a heavy bag of *colonatas*, of which I have no doubt that very good use was made by the captors on the first favourable opportunity. Three loud cheers having then been given by the Spaniards to their generous foe, and one especially for me, the vessels parted, and the *Felicidad* proceeded on her way.

She was destined, however, never again to reach the coast of Spain. On the following day, the north-easterly winds set in upon us anew with redoubled violence. During forty-eight hours we struggled against the gale, with a lee shore on our larboard quarter, and our worn-out sails and rigging were fearfully damaged by the weather. I spared no exertion to assist the captain, who, overpowered by fatigue and anxiety, was fast giving way, yet I could not but see that his worst forebodings would soon be verified.

I had been for more than twenty-four hours on deck, either in command myself of the vessel, or giving a hand where it might be most required, when it became absolutely necessary for me to seek a little repose. Hardly had I lain down below, when I fell fast asleep. I was awakened, not by the sailor whom I had appointed to call me within two hours, but by a terrific crash. I rushed on deck: the vessel had struck, and was parting fast asunder.

"We must clear away the boats—it is our only chance!" exclaimed I in Spanish to the paralyzed crew; and by dint of great exertion one of these was got afloat.

"Get on board, for heaven's sake!" cried the captain, "I will leave the ship last."

I had stepped into the boat, and he had followed me; but an unfortunate boy whose arm had been broken by a falling spar, shrieked wildly for assistance from the ship.

We were still heaving on the very waves which now dashed over the deck of the shattered vessel, as she lay upon the rugged reef almost upon her beam ends. I extended my hand to the wounded boy, who was within reach. He failed to grasp it once. I stretched to the utmost out of the boat when we were again thrown back towards him by the surf; this time he seized my arm, but it was with the desperation of a drowning man. I lost my hold of the boat, and was dragged away into the roaring billows. How I managed to shake off the iron death-grasp, which had nearly proved fatal to me, I cannot tell; but when, after a fearful struggle, I succeeded in reaching the main-chains of the wreck, and had scrambled up the shrouds beyond the reach of the waves, I could distinguish, by the fitful moonlight, neither the boy whom I had attempted to save, nor the boat which had borne off the rest of the crew. What their fate may have been I have never known; but I think it highly improbable that they can have weathered the gale, and have every reason to believe that my own life was saved by the very exertion which had appeared most to endanger it.

I passed the remainder of that night clinging to the shrouds of the luckless *Felicidad*, and fearfully rocked by each shock which she received from the breakers. Happily for me, however, she was now so firmly wedged into the rocks, that her shattered mast still remained above water, and I was there placed in comparative security. When the morning dawned, the wind began to lull; the sun revived my chilled and almost exhausted frame, and I was able to make some reflections as to the best means of continuing my arduous struggles for existence.

I now saw that the *Felicidad* had struck upon a low reef or ledge of rocks extending for some hundred yards in advance of a headland of larger dimensions, upon which I could discern some straggling spots of vegetation. Relinquishing my position on the shrouds, I descended upon the deck. There, after a minute and perilous search among the various articles which had been thrown up by the waters from the shattered hold, and which were still adhering to various portions of the wreck, I was fortunate enough to discover two bottles of brandy, a tin case containing a few biscuits, and a small wooden bowl. My first object was to place these inestimable treasures in safety; and fastening them upon my back, I crept along the rugged and slippery ledge until I found myself safely lodged with my provisions on the high rock to which it conducted.

Ascending the summit of this landing-place, I surveyed my new dominions: they consisted of a rude platform extending for about

a thousand yards, and forming a small island, surrounded upon all sides by breakers, and separated by a channel several miles in width from a long line of coast, which I judged to be one of the Northern Azores.

The rocky platform was studded with cactus and covered with the nests of sea-birds, for which its ever-solitary recesses were a favourite haunt. I also found that in some parts the rain-water had lodged in sufficient quantity to supply my immediate wants. I therefore proceeded at once to prepare for myself the best meal I could. Having fortunately about me my knife and my tinder-box, I cut some of the fruit of the cactus, and lighting a fire with the dried leaves and branches, I cooked a few birds' eggs, which, together with my other slender provisions, completely restored my strength.

I afterwards returned in the direction of the wreck: she was now falling fast asunder, and before the day was out, nothing more of her was to be seen but the few fragments which were cast up by the waves upon the rock where I was stationed.

These I collected as carefully as I could; for I had from the first seen that my only chance of eventually preserving my life was to attempt to reach the mainland.

Selecting from the scattered ropes and spars those that would best suit my purpose, I conveyed them to the further extremity of the rock, and set diligently to work in constructing a raft as well as circumstances would allow. I then cooked a great number of the eggs which I found about me, collected all the fruit of the cactus which was at all ripe, and secured them upon my raft.

The wind which had dashed the Felicidad on the eastern side of the rocky island was fair for my present undertaking. The gale had subsided, and its violence, should it again arise, would not be very much felt in the channel which I was about to traverse. Recommending myself, therefore, to the protection of the Almighty, I cast off from the island whose barren yet hospitable shore I had so gladly welcomed in the morning. To my great joy, I found that my raft floated perfectly, and that one of the Spaniard's jibs, which I had succeeded in securing and in adapting to her, rendered her tolerably manageable.

My progress was extremely slow; still it was in the right direction, and I could entertain reasonable expectation that, in the course of the night, I should be able to accomplish the greater part of the passage. After several hours of anxious watching, relieved by a few intervals of broken slumber, day again dawned upon me, and I saw that I had advanced still more rapidly than I had anticipated. My rocky landing-place of the day before was now far away, and seemed but as a dark spot among the white breakers that surrounded it, while the opposite coast extended like a *beauteous panorama* before me, resplendent in the beams of the *morning sun*. I could discern the narrow beach, the small white *villas* embedded in their luxuriant gardens, and even a little town or village, studding with its scattered cottages the declivity of a *gently-wooded hill*. Within two hours, thought I, I may reach

this lovely resting-place; I may again tread in safety the firm mainland, among the hospitable abodes of my fellow-creatures.

For a time, the small town, which was now the goal of all my hopes, appeared to expand more and more before me, as I more nearly approached it. I could not but remark, however, that though lying, when I had at first discerned it, considerably to my right, it appeared in time to face me, and then to fall gradually back upon my larboard quarter. The breeze, which was very slight, continued perfectly fair, and should have driven me directly upon that point. There must be a current, thought I, in this channel; still, if the wind keeps up, I shall reach the shore, though further down to the right than I had at first anticipated.

By the middle of the day there was a complete lull, so that I could make no progress towards the land. I was therefore drifted by the stream along the coast, without being enabled to approach it any nearer, until towards evening, when a slight ripple was again perceptible on the calm and glassy surface of the waters.

"Thank Heaven," exclaimed I, "the breeze is arising again."

I hoisted my sail as before; but to fill it I was obliged to shift its settings more than once.

"God of mercy! can it be possible," cried I; "the *terral* has set in with the evening, and the breeze is now dead from the land!"

In vain I endeavoured to bend and to stretch the jib, so as to approach any point of the coast before me. In every direction that I could give to my frail canvas the wind still carried me away. I hauled down my sail, trusting that the slight breeze would have but a trifling effect upon the raft itself. Alas! I could not conceal from myself that the shore was receding. Again and again I gazed, hoping against hope itself; but there could be no doubt—

I WAS BORNE OUT TO SEA.

What was to be done? Though I was not a bad swimmer, it would have been madness to attempt reaching that shore without my raft; yet I could not direct her, and my utmost force barely sufficed to arrest her fatal progress, with the rude paddle into which I had now converted one of my detached spars. Feeling that it was my first duty to husband my strength, I sat down, after a few and unavailing efforts to struggle against the present contingency, and considered, as calmly as I could, what chances of safety might still be left me. I could conceive but two: either the wind might shift, and set in again from the sea; or I might meet with some vessel, and succeed in attracting her attention. Resigning myself to the Almighty, I took some slight refreshment, and, wearied out with anxiety and fatigue, I at length fell into a deep sleep.

The next morning broke with unaltered splendour; the sea was calm, the sky cloudless, the slight breath of the wind was again quite fair from the offing, but, alas! I had been borne so far from the shore, that the propitious breeze was now unavailing. The smiling island which, on the day before, I had already claimed as my refuge and my haven, showed but as a dark blue hill, rising out of the water plain that surrounded it; and the wind must shift once v

ere I could hope to reach that rounded and receding line of coast. How can I recall or record the long, tedious hours of hopeless watching which then ensued? One sail appeared that morning—far, far on the distant horizon; another one, nearer, towards evening; but though my practised eye could well discern them, their best telescopes could not have distinguished me, had I been closer to them by many a mile. I husbanded my provisions with my utmost care; but they were failing fast, and the fresh water which I had succeeded in saving from the wreck was almost exhausted. The hours crept on in slow and weary succession; the cravings of my hunger, the still intenser sufferings of my thirst, now tortured me in vain: the last fragment of my provisions, the last priceless drop of my fresh water, were exhausted.

Another dark and chilling night.—Another bright morning smiling on my despair, like the eye of heartless or unmoved beauty at the tortures of unrequited love.—Another burning meridian, raising to desperation the anguish of my unslaked thirst.—Another evening.

Another evening! What are they doing at Elmswater now? The bright harvest-day's labour is over, and the reapers and stackers are joyously wending their homeward way; but they are arrested by the steward. Lord Arlingford is coming on the ground himself, and a barrel of his best home-brewed is to be broached, that all may drink to a heavy threshing out. How slowly and deferentially do they draw near to claim, in their turn, the overflowing cup! Why do they not rush to the very cask and quench, with its unnumbered gallons, their burning thirst? Oh, that I were there to lead the way! The mere dregs which the humblest ploughboy is casting from him should not go to waste.

But such would hardly be my portion. The cellars are full of the choicest wines; the garden-walls are covered with the ripened fruits; the hothouses are teeming with grapes and peaches;—all, and more than all, for me, could my present lingering agony be suspected. And they guess it—they know it at last! I see the clear outline of the blissful shore; and they are there,—all whom I have loved, all who have loved me from my infancy,—extending towards me their opening arms, oh! with what unearthly tenderness! I start up to respond to their impassioned appeal; but, alas! the fevered death-dream of an instant has already fled: there is nothing around me but the poisoned mockery of water, which is hastening to enshroud my still sentient corpse!

But soft! It is no vision this time. Is not that a sail to windward? Is she not approaching? Am I not floating upon her very course? She might, she will distinguish me. With all my remaining strength I raised again my slender canvas, and fastened my coat to my low, rude mast. She sees me at length, and is bringing to! No, she is tacking! Her sails are set again—she is standing fast away on another course.

I threw myself full length upon the rugged spars, and laughed in loud and delirious despair.

* * * * *

CHAPTER XVII.

The oak leviathans, whose huge ribs make
 Their clay creator the vain title take,
 Of Lord of thee and arbiter of war,
 These are thy toys.—BYRON.

WHEN my senses returned, I was in a strange place, with strange faces around me.

"Il me semble qu'il reprend connaissance," said a dark-visaged man, with the purest French accent. "Ma foi! il était temps."

"Where am I?" muttered I, in the same language.

I was assured that I was in safety, and with friends.

"Have I been long insensible or delirious?"

"More than a month."

"I see that I am on board a vessel, and I should think a man-of-war. How came I here?"

"We picked you up at sea, on a small raft, in a state of complete exhaustion."

"What ship is this?"

"The French Republican frigate, the Cornaline."

"Where is she bound for?"

"For Bourbon, with despatches."

"Whereabouts are we now?"

"Between St. Helena and the Cape."

"Whom have I the honour of addressing?"

"The surgeon of the ship. I will call the captain, who has been very anxious about your recovery."

This officer soon afterwards entered, expressed great pleasure at seeing me in a more favourable state, and requested me to call for everything that the ship could afford.

Though nothing could exceed the attentions I received on board the Cornaline, my strength returned but slowly. The sufferings I had undergone had been so great and so protracted, that my constitution had received a very severe shock, and it required the utmost skill of science to drive the destroyer back from the prey which he had held almost within his grasp. The confined atmosphere of my cabin, the distracting noise of the ship, the rude heavings of the almost incessant sea gales, told fearfully upon my shattered system; and day by day my weary convalescence was retarded.

How in those lonesome and cheerless hours the recollection of Oratava, and of its cherished inmate, recurred to my thoughts! Ah! Dolores, thought I, little knowest thou the condition of him whom the light of thine eyes in vain recalled to existence. Could I but see thee smile upon me once more, could I again breathe the enchanted air of thy beauteous abode, could I pass but one day in thy garden, and at thy side, I feel as if my

exhausted being might again throb with the pulse of life. But from whence now can hope, and health, and happiness be recalled?

Weeks rolled on ere my enfeebled limbs could support me for more than an hour on the giddy quarter-deck; months elapsed, and still I felt no power of exertion, and no care for the future. We arrived at Bourbon, and we left it; we traversed the Indian Ocean; we touched at Pondicherry; we again stood out towards the Chinese Seas, and I remained still in the same prostrate and listless frame of body and of mind. What were to me the chances of time, and of place, and of scene? they brought me no strength, they brought me no health; no comfort for the present, no hope for the future.

"I would give much," said the captain to me one day, "to see you recruit your spirits. When we reach the Philippines I hope to make a short stay there, and I shall take a small house on shore, where I trust you will be more comfortable than here."

"You are too good," said I. "If care and kindness could restore me, I should have been well long since; but I much fear that the principle of life is exhausted and extinguished within me."

"We often think thus," answered the captain, "in severe sickness or affliction; but time will not the less bring back strength, comfort, or at least greater powers of endurance. I should not be myself alive now if youth had not some secret vitality of its own, greater than it conceives or suspects."

The manners of this officer had from the first pleased and attracted me. Where the Citoyen Royaumont could have acquired the high-bred air and singular courtesy which pre-eminently distinguished him, I was at a loss to conceive. With the coarse and rude republicans who surrounded him, he was always reserved and distant; but when he addressed me, which he seldom failed to do for a few minutes every day, his smile and voice seemed to me extremely prepossessing; and then his conversation would in a certain degree call to my mind that of Thornton, though less animated by the fire of early youth. His disposition showed itself habitually moody and taciturn. He would for hours pace the lonely quarter-deck, with his brows sternly knit, as if reflecting upon some sad and bygone event ever present to his mind. Occasionally he would stop; a slight shudder would convulse his whole frame; he would slowly draw his hand over his eyes, and then resume his solitary walk.

He appeared to me a very good officer, having not only great theoretic information, but also much experience and practice in nautical matters, and he was evidently much looked up to by all on board.

Among other tokens of Captain Royaumont's extreme civility, I could not but remark that while most of those with whom I conversed on board the ship pressed their interrogations rather *anxiously as to my real rank and station*, he never once addressed *any single question to me bearing upon this subject; and yet,*

though I dined and associated principally with the other officers, his manner to me seemed to evince that from my appearance he considered me to be of equal rank with himself.

I, however, had but one answer to all inquiries: I was the son of an English merchant, taking his passage home from Madeira, when shipwrecked off the Azores. I believe the precautions I thus took to have been unnecessary; still it appeared to me safer not to declare myself to be an English officer, and at all events I thereby avoided the many discussions and differences which would in all probability have arisen as to the respective merits of the two services, had my real position been known.

When we arrived at Manilla, Captain Royauumont, according to the obliging intention which he had expressed, took a small villa in the neighbourhood of the town. There, to his inexpressible satisfaction, my health and spirits began gradually to return. The charm of the climate and the scenery, the cheerful aspect of the busy town, after the dreary confinement of our long navigation, the variety and abundance of every species of fruit and fresh provisions which the island afforded, tended materially to accelerate my recovery: before we had been a month on shore I was myself again.

I now conversed by the hour with Royauumont, and day by day our intimacy increased. Though I could not often persuade a smile to break upon the habitual gloom of his countenance, still the complete restoration of that life which he had almost miraculously saved even from the very jaws of death, seemed to be a subject of lasting satisfaction to him, and there was something paternal in the protective kindness which he incessantly showed to me.

"Now that I am recovered," said I to him one morning, "I must inquire about the best means of returning to England; for though ever most deeply grateful for all the benefits I have received from you, I must remember that you are not bringing me much nearer home."

"And how do you propose returning?"

"Well, I don't exactly know. If there were any English merchants settled here, they would perhaps consent to assist me upon the references that I could give. If not, I might work my passage to Spain upon some ship, and run my chance either of slipping over from thence to England by some other means, or of being captured by one of our cruisers. Why do you smile?"

"I was thinking that your countrymen are a strange race, and deservedly masters of so large a portion of the globe. Here you are, not yet a man—the son, as you say, of a common merchant; your foot was but yesterday in the grave, and you are talking as lightly of going from one extremity of the earth to the other, without a friend at your side, and without a franc in your pocket, as you would of stepping across the street."

"Well, but necessity knows no law, and you can't be surprised that I should wish to see my country again."

"No, to be sure, but I look upon myself as still responsible for

you, and I cannot allow you to be the victim of your inexperience. When I leave this place, I shall consider myself free, by my instructions, to return directly to France. I have every reason to believe that I shall be in the seas of Europe as soon as any vessel upon which you might embark; and when there, I can devise some plan of restoring you to your home. You have nothing better to do than to stay on with me; and indeed it is your duty to your family to run no further risks, saving those that are inevitable."

"But how can I continue to trespass thus upon the kindness of a stranger, I cannot say an enemy?"

"Never give that subject a thought. I have, in former days, myself received much kindness from your countrymen. This I am happy to requite; and if I can succeed in giving you and yours a good opinion of your adversaries, I am not entirely neglecting the service of my country."

"Be it so, then," said I, "and may God grant me some day an opportunity of showing my gratitude!"

Thus was I still on board the *Cornaline*, when she set sail from Manila, to traverse the broad Pacific, on her homeward course. The energy of my mind had returned with the strength of my body, and remarking that *Royaumont* possessed more knowledge upon nautical matters than any one with whom I had, as yet, been equally familiar, I thought it my duty to my own professional prospects, to acquire from him as much information as possible. I, therefore, during the long hours which we passed together, led the conversation, as much as I could, upon subjects connected both with navigation and seamanship; and my previous studies, to which I took care never directly to allude, giving me a facility and an intelligence which must certainly have appeared remarkable to the French captain, he soon entered into my views, and found some pleasure in our technical discourses.

I have often considered since, that the knowledge I thus acquired contributed very materially to my future proficiency, not only on account of the very superior qualifications of my instructor, but because the more difficult and abstruse questions being thus solved to my mind in two different idioms, I was less liable to remain satisfied with the mere possession of the formulas, and could arrive at a more perfect apprehension of the principles themselves.

Our passage towards Cape Horn was rapidly and successfully accomplished; but scarcely had we entered the Straits of Magellan, when the awful gales, for which they are famed, overtook us with extreme intensity. During her long voyage, the *Cornaline* had lost two officers and several of her best men: she was now short of hands; the crew, which was made up mostly of conscripts, was weary and discouraged in the extreme, and *Royaumont's* duties and exertions became most arduous. Night and day he was upon deck, ever reviving, by his unfailing spirit and energy, his desponding shipmates, and attending to every detail. I longed to offer him my assistance; but much as I might be supposed to have profited by his conversation upon professional matters, I could not be

deemed efficient for any species of command on board without revealing my real qualifications; and this I now felt reluctant to do, from the mere reason that I had concealed them so long.

For three days we had been exposed to a far fiercer gale than that which had driven the *Felicidad* upon the breakers, and the fury of the tempest seemed yet on the increase. A foresail and two close-reefed main-topsails had been blown away, and we were running before the storm under bare poles. When, after a few hours' sleep, I ascended the deck one morning, about daybreak, the sky and the sea were dark as ink, a huge watery mountain seemed ever following us, ever on the point of overwhelming us with its towering mass, and the horizon was merged into a close circle of foaming billows.

"It is well," said I to Royaumont, "that the straits are tolerably wide here, and that the wind is dead through them. I should not like to see a lee-shore just now."

The captain significantly raised his eyebrows in token of assent, and then added:—

"We may reckon, I trust, that the wind will hold in this quarter so long as its present fury endures; if not, human skill would soon be unavailing."

I remained by him for some time, and then proceeded to the foretop where a slight accident had occurred, in repairing which, I thought I could lend a hand.

While there, and gazing attentively before me, one of those breaks, which occur at times in the most stormy and darkened sky, revealed to my wearied sight the unmistakable fact that there was a low line of rugged shoals not very far ahead. To the uninitiated in seafaring matters it would be impossible to convey the least idea of what I felt on thus beholding almost inevitable destruction so close at hand. My presence of mind did not, however, wholly forsake me; I regained the deck, and hastily informed Royaumont that we were within a mile of the breakers. He calmly inquired whether I were certain of the fact, and when I had reiterated my statement, he steadfastly looked me in the face, and said:—

"*Nous sommes perdus, mon cher.*"

"I am afraid we are," answered I; "but why, as a last chance, not try for soundings, and see if we cannot bring the ship up, even on the edge of the breakers?"

One cast of the deep-sea-lead soon gave us to understand that to anchor with any chance of success, we must run our cables out to the very clinch. This was done; and, with two anchors ahead, the ship brought up, swinging rapidly round to all the fury of the gale.

During the ensuing moment of security, I studied most carefully, with my glass over the stern, the exact shape and position of the rocks, and it was not long before I was joined by *Royaumont*.

"*Look here,*" said I to him, "I have been most attentively considering the shape of this ledge, and, as far as I can see, there

appears to be, there, right astern, a channel of clear water among the rocks. Watch well yourself."

"It may be," answered Royaumont, after a minute examination of the point to which I had directed his attention, "but your sight is better than mine. The sea runs so high that I can hardly distinguish the opening."

"I am pretty sure that I am right," replied I. "Follow the line across from the starboard quarter. There are first the rocks clean out of water;—then, see how the surf is tossed on into high pillars, until we come to that point I showed you. There are no breakers there, nothing but the foam of the waves;—and then, further still, the sea is again dashed mountains high into the same white columns. I have more than once marked some such effect upon the coast of Brittany. There is a safe passage there, I truly believe; and if we can but succeed in reaching it there is still a chance for us."

"*C'est possible*," answered Royaumont, borrowing my glass to follow up my observations; but, within a few seconds our eyes met again.

"What can it be?" exclaimed I. "The fury of the storm seems unabated, and yet there is a lull in the struggles of the ship against the wind and sea. Surely both cables can't have parted? By heaven, they have! See, we have already swung broadside on to the rocks, and are drifting fast to leeward."

"The storm staysails are our only chance now," cried Royaumont. "I will set them at once, while you remain here, with two of the best helmsmen, to keep her head, if you can, for the opening which you saw."

So urgent was the peril, and so great the sympathy now established between the French captain and myself, that neither of us, perhaps, remarked that we were communicating together as if both were officers in the same service, and engaged in the same duty.

The staysails were soon set, and the ship, once more yielding to the influence of her canvas, became tolerably manageable. I soon saw, however, that we had not sufficient sail on her, and that, do what we could at the helm to keep her up, she was still drifting towards the breakers. I did not fail to report this also to Royaumont, and urged him to try, for a time, his close-reefed main-topsail. Concurring in this view, he gave the necessary orders, and some of the ablest hands were sent aloft to bend and set the sail. But most of the men were so exhausted with watching and fatigue that their strength was no longer sufficient for this perilous operation.

The fury of the tempest was now at its height. One poor fellow, then a second, then a third, were torn away by the raging blast from the yard-arm and hurled into the sea. Another fell upon deck, and was dashed, before our eyes, into bloody fragments.

"Six more reefers aloft," said Royaumont, who had now taken the command of the ship; but the stoutest hearts were appalled, and the cry arose that it was useless to expose any more lives.

"Are you mad?" cried the captain. "Do not you see that your very existence depends upon your immediate obedience?"

Still no one stirred.

"Must I go up myself and show you the way?" exclaimed the infuriated Royaumont. But I could resist no longer, and motioning to one stout fellow, who appeared most willing to proceed, "*Voyons, mon ami,*" said I, in my best French; "*à nous, les deux empointures;*" and I sprang up into the shrouds.

My example, and the contemptuous remonstrance it elicited from the captain, now produced the desired effect. I was soon followed by seven or eight men, and within a few minutes we had hands enough in the maintop. Still keeping the lead, I moved to the extremity from which the accidents had occurred, and proceeded, faithful to my word, to assist in securing the weather-earring myself. This had been, on board the Culloden, one of my frequent and favourite exploits; yet, though not an unpractised hand, I had never made the attempt in such circumstances. The whole force of the gale seemed directed against me, as if to precipitate me from the giddy eminence to which I had reached, and never in the whole course of my life have I had such a desperate need of the utmost firmness of my nerves, and the utmost strength of my arm. The French topmen, however, stimulated by the presence and exertions of one whom they considered as merely an English landsman, fell stoutly to their work, and in time the close-reefed topsail was set. I then descended upon deck, and had the inexpressible gratification of hearing the four stout fellows who were at the helm declare to Royaumont, as I approached him, that the ship was perfectly manageable.

"Then luff a little more," said the captain, "and all will be right."

We were soon enabled to ascertain that I had not been mistaken, and though black rocks arose within a few hundred yards on either bow, there was a channel through which we could move in comparative security. This we traversed with the utmost caution, until we were safe again in the deep water without.

For some hours the gale continued with unabated force; but it now bore us away from the perilous approach of the coast, which we had neared too much in the night. During the evening the wind lulled, the straits narrowed upon us, and we found an excellent anchorage in a small and sheltered bay.

"You have saved the ship," said Royaumont to me, "and betrayed yourself at the same time. Now tell me why you did not at once inform me that you were a British naval officer."

"I should have made no secret of the matter if you had ever asked me the question; though I may have thought it but natural at first to conceal my position from those whom I could only then consider as strangers and enemies."

"Well I shall make no indiscreet inquiries," returned Royaumont, and the subject was dropped for some time.

One fine evening, about three weeks afterwards, when we were far advanced in the Atlantic, Royaumont, after walking some time

with me on deck, invited me to enter his cabin, and there opening an old file of English papers, he handed one to me as containing some interesting matters. I sat down to peruse it, and my attention was almost immediately attracted by a passage to the following effect:—"We regret to learn that the illustrious family of the Marquis of Arlingford are gone into mourning for Lord Edward Rockingham, younger son of the marquis, of whose death, during the fatal affair at Teneriffe, there appears now to be little doubt. Lord Edward was a young officer of high promise, and his early loss is a subject of deep regret to all who knew him."

After reading attentively this passage, I accidentally raised my eyes, and I beheld those of Royaumont fixed upon me with an expression of the deepest interest. There was more in his smile than any words could convey, but still, as he made no inquiry, I remained silent.

"Perhaps there is a happy day still in store for that family," said he at length to me.

"If sorcerers had your age and appearance, I should take you for one," answered I, laughing; "now tell me how you can have discovered me."

"If you wish to keep a strict incognito, you had better not wear a signet-ring bearing the arms and supporters of your family, and the far-famed motto, '*Toujours en avant*.'"

"And pray tell me how it comes that a fierce Republican like you can know anything at all about these matters?"

"I do not pretend to have ever been a Republican. There was a time when I attentively and devotedly studied the politics and history of your country, which, as one of your officers once told me, it is hardly possible to understand and follow up without having a Peerage, so that I have always had one among my books. Do you remember one evening my asking you to give me an impression of your signet-ring? I may now own that it was with a view of attempting to ascertain whether I was mistaken in judging from your appearance that you belonged to one of England's noblest families. Your motto immediately struck me; I remembered having remarked it while looking over the armorial bearings represented in your peerage, and after an attentive search I discovered it, as well as your name and age. While at Manilla I obtained these English papers, and this passage relating to you, in connection with the circumstances under which our acquaintance had begun, confirmed my suspicions that you were the person there alluded to."

"Well, I can only assure you," answered I, "that I should have resorted to no concealment with you had you made any inquiries upon the matter."

"You were perfectly justified," rejoined the captain, "in acting as you have done. With me you are perfectly safe, and so I trust you would have been with all French officers; though some certainly might have been tempted to bring back with them to Paris a prisoner of your rank."

My intimacy with Royaumont now, if possible, increased.

became his daily guest, his hourly companion, and we conversed unreservedly upon every subject saving his own history. Upon this point, though deeply anxious to learn the cause of the perpetual gloom that sat upon his brow, I could not succeed in eliciting any information from my new friend. In the hopes of moving him to greater confidence, I entered very freely with him into all the particulars of my own life, my adventures with Mrs. Wentworth, my sojourn at Oratava, my love for my cousin. To all these and more particularly to everything connected with this last point, Royaumont was not only an attentive but an interested listener, and I was surprised at times to see with what eagerness he would question me respecting Sophia's age, her fortune, my prospects and those of my elder brother. Still, though there was evidently far more in his thoughts, as we conversed upon these matters, than he was willing to reveal, he spoke little; and when one day I more closely than usual pressed my questions with respect to himself:—

"Never inquire more," said he, grasping my hand, "as to what I have seen and gone through: it is too awful to be talked of or to be thought of."

Our voyage homewards through the Southern Atlantic was in the meanwhile peculiarly successful. We reached the West Indies, without any new adventure, touched for a very short time at the principal French islands, and then proceeded to Porto Rico, with some despatches, of which the authorities had requested Royaumont to take charge. Our stay at St. Juan di Porto Rico was particularly pleasant, and the inhabitants were not the less happy to see us, that a British ship of war had been lately cruising close in shore, and had been doing considerable damage to their trade.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Thou, desperate pilot, now at once run on
The dashing rocks thy sea-sick, weary bark!

ROMEO AND JULIET.

WHILE in this harbour, as I was one morning pacing the deck of the Cornaline, I saw a vessel far in the offing, which seemed to me to bear the appearance of a man-of-war. I was proceeding to Royaumont to request him to lend me his telescope, when I perceived that he was himself most intently examining the strange sail.

"She looks rather like an armed vessel of some kind or other," said I to him.

"I thought so for a moment," replied he, "but upon inspection she appears to me to be one of the heavy Cuba merchantmen."

"Just lend me your glass for an instant," said I.

"It is out of order; you will see nothing with it," answered Royaumont, rather abruptly, and he left me to reflect upon the contradiction involved in his two last replies.

Soon afterwards, I observed him in close conversation with the first-lieutenant and with the boatswain, both of whom in turn most attentively considered the suspicious sail with the very same glass which, as I had been told, was unfit for use. Having made it a rule never indiscreetly to press any question upon the officers of the Cornaline, I said nothing more; and the vessel which had for a moment excited so much interest soon disappeared behind the long low headland which enclosed the bay on the northern side.

During the whole of the afternoon, men were constantly despatched to the cross-trees and even as high as the masthead, and I saw that their report was anxiously expected by the captain, and seemed to confirm more and more some impression or misgiving of his mind. At dinner, he was more than usually courteous to me, but I could remark the same expression on his countenance which it had worn on the morning when we were assailed by the extreme fury of the tornado, a look of stern resolution and of deep but compressed excitement. These slight incidents, and a certain intuitive presentiment which has never failed to give me its vague but ever faithful warning when any crisis of my life was at hand, absorbed my thoughts, and occupied my speculations during the whole evening.

I retired to my cabin at my usual hour, but it was long before I could close my eyes; and when at last sleep crept over my senses, they did not rest, but they were distracted by sundry harassing and ominous visions. I fancied that my quiet cot was rocked and lashed by the waves, as the pinnacle of the Sea-horse on the night of our attack upon Teneriffe. The shore was alive with watch-fires and with the bright flashes of the artillery, but still we pressed on, Thornton himself leading the van, regardless of the remonstrance of Nelson. We reached the land, but the surf ran high as the tallest of our seamen, and our frail bark was restless and wild as madness. In vain for a moment, we strove to fix her; she leaped and dashed fiercely upon the rocks, until she burst asunder, and we were plunged into the roaring abyss.

I awoke, and so vivid had been the imagery of my dream, that several minutes elapsed ere I could fully collect my senses. I could not sleep again, and longing to breathe the fresh night air, I ascended the deck with a noiseless step. After walking there for some time, I reclined against one of the carronades, my eyes fixed on the wide expanse of sea before me, while my thoughts wandered back to the fatal scenes which my dream had so forcibly recalled.

Suddenly I fancied that I could perceive, in the midst of the broad and sparkling wake which the moon was tracing on the motionless surface of the bay, three small dark specks. I was intently watching these, as they seemed almost imperceptibly to increase in size, when I heard at my ear a deep and well-known voice:—

"On ne vous trompe pas, Edouard," said Royauumont, "et j'ai eu tort de l'essayer ce matin. En moins d'une demi-heure nous

serons attaqués, et il est impossible, vous le savez bien, que vous restiez sur le pont."

A short conversation here ensued between us, Royaumont urging, in the strongest terms, the necessity of my going below during the forthcoming action, and I still more vehemently requesting to remain as spectator of a scene which both personally and professionally must interest me so deeply. At length, the captain, who was evidently unwilling to disoblige me, as well as anxious to attend to other matters, made the required concession, not, however, until I had most solemnly pledged my honour that neither by deed, word, or look, would I take part in the approaching conflict.

I well saw that all the orders had been carefully given beforehand, that the whole crew of the *Cornaline* were heavily armed, but that with the exception of about a dozen men, who had been desired to saunter about, or to appear to sleep upon deck, they were held below concealed, though ready for immediate action.

The enemy's boats were now fast approaching. I could catch the slight sound of their muffled oars, and distinguish the heads and the flashing arms of the seamen with which they were crowded. Soon the low murmuring of their voices was heard, as they joyfully approached the scene of the looked-for combat. Oh! how the unforgetten accents of that tongue struck upon my heart!

They were close alongside. As I stood, concealing myself behind one of the guns of the quarter-deck, I distinctly heard the footsteps of my countrymen, clambering eagerly from their boats upon the expected prize.

Then was seen, peering anxiously from the main-chains over the bulwarks, first the broad, honest visage of one gigantic seaman, then, rather lower, another, and then the fair head of the youthful midshipman as he motioned, with his cap in his hand, his brave followers to ascend.

"Now, my men," cried he, "look sharp, and the ship is ours."

One word, and I might still save them; one cry of warning, and my countrymen might yet escape the doom which on all sides was lurking in wait for them. I could bear the sight no longer. I arose, and rushed forward; but an iron grasp was at my throat, and I heard the deep voice of Royaumont at my ear, as the muzzle of his pistol pressed hard upon my brow.

"Malheureux! J'avais votre parole! Si vous bougez, je vous fais sauter la cervelle."

Cursing the hour when I had given that fatal, but solemn pledge, I motioned to Royaumont to unhand me: but our struggle had not been unperceived by the British officer.

"God d—n you," cried he, to his followers, "you have been so long coming up, that you have let the barge get the start of you over there. Now then, move on briskly."

"*Debout là, mes enfans, et feu,*" exclaimed Royaumont, in his turn; and the deck was covered with armed men.

"By G—, they are expecting us!" said the midshipman

starting back. "Never mind—hold fast, and we will have the vessel yet."

I fell on my knees, and burying my face in my hands, that I might not witness the awful result I apprehended, I called upon the Almighty to protect the flag of England in that hour of her utmost need.

Volleys were now exchanged in quick succession, and loud shouts of mutual defiance, soon followed, alas! by shrieks of anguish, as the brave fell, never again to rise; but high above the tumult I could distinguish the voice of the undaunted midshipman, as he sternly warned his followers, that all was lost if they gave way for an instant. The roar of the fight increased, subsided, again rose, and then fell; still I could not bear to raise my eyes. At length, I felt a friendly hand pressing my shoulder.

"It is all over," said Royaumont, with his usual self-possession. "We have spared as many as we possibly could; but it is no easy matter to make your countrymen prisoners. We must now weigh immediately and attack the vessel herself, which has sent us so warm a greeting."

"What has become of the officer?" inquired I.

"I am afraid his wars are over. However, he is in the hands of our surgeon, who will do the best he can for him."

We were here interrupted by the arrival of the Spanish officer commanding one of the revenue gun-boats lying in the harbour, who had come in all haste to inquire into the particulars of the affray. I saw that Royaumont was anxious to reconduct him to his pinnace, so as himself to pursue his operations alone; but the Spaniard clearly perceived that the Cornaline was getting under weigh, and before we could reach the roadstead without, two gun-boats were following fast upon us.

When we weathered the low promontory which enclosed the bay, we immediately saw the British brig lying at anchor within a quarter of a mile of us. To risk an action, with scarcely half a crew left, against such unequal forces, would have been madness on her part. She therefore slipped her cables at once, and stood out to sea, closely pursued by the Cornaline and the two gun-boats. During half an hour, a very sharp running fight was kept up, and I well saw that we were gaining upon the brig, when a loud crash was heard aloft, and our maintop-mast fell heavily over.

Royaumont stamped upon the deck, and with a loud oath, the only one I had ever heard him utter, cursed the shot which marred all the prospects of the night. I could distinctly hear, through the still night air, the distant cheer of my countrymen, as, with a parting broadside, they bade farewell to their disabled pursuer; but though my heart responded truly to that cry, Royaumont's kindness to me forbade me to betray any feelings at variance with his own bitter disappointment. We returned, as best we could, to the harbour, and the men were ordered to their *hammocks*, the repairs of the damages sustained being, with the exception of a few indispensable arrangements, deferred until the next day.

I had been so attentive and so anxious a spectator of these events, that I had almost forgotten the young officer whose gallant bearing had inspired me with so much interest during the earlier part of the night. Having now been informed that the fresh air might be beneficial to him, I obtained Royaumont's permission to have him removed upon deck as soon as all was again at rest on board the *Cornaline*. This was accomplished with great care, under the superintendence of the surgeon; and when, by the grey light of the fast approaching dawn, I gazed on the insensible figure before me, I recognised, in the altered and death-stricken features, those of my old schoolfellow, Mordaunt.

After a few minutes, the morning air appeared to revive him, for he moved several times, and uttering two or three deep groans, he opened his eyes and inquired where he was.

"In safety," answered I, "and with an old friend at your side."

Mordaunt looked anxiously at me, and raising himself with a painful effort, said:—

"Surely that is the voice of Rockingham, and his features too; but, since when have you been on board the *Water Witch*?"

"This is not the *Water Witch*," replied I, anxious to recall him gradually to a sense of his present position.

"Ah! I remember now," murmured he faintly. "I fell after that last sword-cut. But where are all my men?"

"Those that are no more," answered I, "have died gallantly in the service of their country; those that are yet alive, will be kindly treated here."

"And how come you, Rockingham, to be thus among the enemy?"

"I have been a prisoner for some time."

"A prisoner!" muttered Mordaunt bitterly. "So this was to be my fate after all. Well, I do not think it will be for long: what does the surgeon say?"

"He gives some hope still."

"Not much, Rockingham, I should think; one of those bullets is just in the right place," resumed Mordaunt, pressing his hand upon his chest, with an expression of intense suffering.

"How came you," rejoined I, after a short pause, "to engage in so rash and almost desperate an enterprise?"

"I have done, since we parted, more hopeless service than this, with tolerable success, though I know my star was not a very lucky one. Then you see, Rockingham, we have on board the *Water Witch* a young commander, of great interest, a cousin to one of the junior Lords. If I had won him his second epaulette to-night," continued he bitterly, "I might perhaps have been mentioned in the report, and stood some chance of being promoted myself before I was quite fifty."

"Fifty," said I, endeavouring to cheer him. "I shall see you an admiral yet, long before that day."

"It's of no use, Rockingham," resumed he. "I know well enough where I shall be, or rather where I shall no longer be, in an hour hence. And why should I regret life? What has it been

to me but a long, unvaried course of vexation and disappointment? How few of those who have passed me by long since, have gone through half of what I have endured; and see where I am now."

"For Heaven's sake, do not speak so," exclaimed I much grieved at the state of his feelings; "trust in God's mercy, and we shall both see better days."

"Ah! God's mercy," replied he, in a tone of deeper asperity than before; "we used to be told a good deal about that at Ashton, when they flogged me for having given you that bullet in church: but I have not heard so much of it since. Others, I suppose have experienced His mercies, but I have never heard His voice, I have nowhere seen His hand."

"How I would that I had a prayer-book," cried I. "This is awful indeed."

"Oh, you need not distress yourself about that," muttered the dying officer; and closing his eyes, evidently in the extremity of human suffering, he held out his hand to me in silence.

The surgeon here joined us, examined with great care the three desperate wounds in Mordaunt's chest, side, and head, and then gave me a look clearly denoting that the end was fast approaching. After a few minutes, my schoolfellow again opened his eyes, and motioning me to draw near, asked me if I had not received from India the two guineas which I had lent to him? Re-assured upon this point, he added, in a voice now almost inarticulate:

"Rockingham, of course all that I have here is yours. If ever you meet Mrs. Wentworth again, you may tell her that it is she who has brought me to this pass, and thank her for it. If I could have seen more of you, you would have found me a faithful friend."

Deeply moved at this heartfelt farewell, I knelt by my expiring countryman, eagerly watching the last faint struggles which now convulsed his frame. They ceased; but the stern expression which sat upon his brow seemed still to defy every hazard of eternity, as it had braved every peril in life. Alas, poor Mordaunt, framed in truth for better things and a less adverse fate! Now thy tale is told, with none to mourn over thine early doom saving one as disowned and as disinherited as thyself.

So both were gone, the two early and only friends of my boyhood! They were no more. The cherished guide of all my loftier feelings, and the dauntless leader of each wilder hour—both had now, in the very front of the onslaught, encountered their kindred doom, while I was still lingering behind! Scarcely could Nature suppress her shudder as I again gazed upon the ghastly work of the destroyer in his fiercest mood; and yet, I did not arise from my bended knees until I had fervently implored the Author of my being, that my last hour might be like theirs.

Thus, ay thus, in the full and untamed ardour of my all unexpended life, the whole oblation of my existence freely laid down *before the shrine of my country, and the still unconquered flag of England hallowing with the radiance of its glory the blood-smear'd but untarnished death-bed of my youth!*

Should that prayer be granted, when the last dread hour will be at hand, how shall I be prepared to meet it? Will my spirit soar eagerly after Thornton's into the bright regions of Hope, or will it be steeled against Dissolution itself with the undaunted and sarcastic indifference of Mordaunt? Alas! Thornton was always my noblest example. Yet why is the recollection of that other farewell to life ever haunting and harassing my soul; as if to inspire it with the recklessness of a congenial despair?

CHAPTER XIX.

'Tis strange, 'tis passing strange,
'Tis pitiful, 'tis wondrous pitiful!—OTHELLO.

WITHIN a fortnight we again set sail, and this time Europe was our destination. The winds were fair, our progress rapid, and after a short passage we found ourselves in the waters of the British Channel.

As the hour approached when we were likely to part, my intercourse with Royaumont became more and more affectionate, and he appeared still more deeply interested than before in the feelings and the hopes with which I was inspired at the prospect of revisiting my long-forsaken home. One evening he called me into his cabin and said:—

"You have often appeared to me desirous of knowing something of my earlier life. It is a subject which I cannot bear to mention, and upon which I have never conversed with any one. Still, as there is a singular conformity between your present position and views and those that were mine at your age,—as there is also much in what I have experienced and suffered which may prove a salutary example and warning to you, I have considered it to be an act of friendship towards you to enter for once into this sad matter. You say that you are still attached to your cousin, though you were but children when you parted."

"I am—devotedly."

"Your brother is good-looking."

"I should think that he must be, unless he be singularly altered."

"And he will succeed to all the wealth and honours of your family?"

"To all."

"Exactly," continued Royamont, musingly. "Then listen."

I conceived that he was about to address me: but after a few minutes' silence he drew his hand across his brow, and opening the drawer of his writing-table took from it a paper, which he handed to me.

"I think that it will spare both our feelings if you merely read this short manuscript, in which I have detailed my principal adventures and misfortunes. You can let me have it again to-morrow; but *pray remember never to allude in conversation,*

either with me or with any other person, to what you will find here related."

Promising most faithfully to comply with this desire, I returned to my cabin and proceeded immediately to read the manuscript.

Painfully and deeply interested as I was by the sad story it retraced, I did not forget the captain's request; and when I restored the paper to him, on the following day, I made no reflection whatever upon its contents. I could not, however, forbear expressing earnestly my desire to keep a copy, or at least a few extracts from it.

"Not for the world," answered my friend; and we changed the subject.

In the course of the evening, Royaumont appeared to regret this abrupt refusal; for, of his own accord, he asked me if I still felt anxious to preserve some record of his memoir.

"More than I can say," replied I.

"Well then take it back and copy it, if you please; but remember that it is for yourself alone,—at least as long as I live."

It is thus that I was enabled to make the following extracts from the manuscript of Royaumont; and I have since always kept them by me.

EXTRACTS FROM THE MEMOIR OF THE MARQUIS DE ROYAUMONT.*

I HAVE not always been the Citizen Royaumont, the obscure agent of a government that I despise and detest. I inherited an illustrious title; I possessed a rich patrimony; I was destined to hold an honourable rank in the most brilliant court in Europe; I have witnessed the last splendours and follies of its end. But title, fortune, family, monarchy, all has been swept away by the fierce blast of the revolution; all alas! except my remembrance. When I look back upon the path of my bygone life, I can there discern nothing but ruin and desolation; and yet in vain do I endeavour to withdraw my eyes from this fatal retrospection.

The Marquis de Royaumont, my father, was one of the wealthiest landed proprietors of the Angoumois. After having served with distinction in Germany, and spent his best years at court, he retired to his estates in consequence of some reverse of fortune, and resolved there to finish his days, far from the intrigues and disappointments of Versailles.

I have never known my mother; she died a few months after my birth, leaving two children, the elder of whom, my brother, was about eight years old when she was withdrawn from us. Though deeply affected at first by his loss, my father in time felt the want of a new partner of his solitude, and four years afterwards married again. My mother-in-law was herself a widow. I

* Translated from the French of the original edition.

can still remember her arrival at the Château de Royaumeont, a few days after her marriage. She was accompanied by a child of about my age, born of her former marriage, and whom my brother and I were desired to look upon and love like a sister. It was thus that, from my earliest hours, I conceived that attachment for Amélie de Beaumanoir, which has had since so decisive an influence upon her destiny, and upon my own.

My elder brother, who was tenderly beloved by my father, soon also became the object of my mother-in-law's warmest affection, and most marked preference. Bold, haughty, and adventurous, the young count possessed all the qualities, and even the faults which my father loved to consider as hereditary in his family. Disliking every kind of study, he excelled in every species of exercise and sport which even then bore any affinity to military pursuits. Ever noisy, restless, and ready to draw his slender sword, he alternately fatigued and frightened Amélie, who, with her pensive and studious disposition, loved to read and to reflect, and who was ever seeking at my side the rest and the protection she required. Thus we became inseparable. We learned together, or rather we mutually taught each other to write, to draw, as well as to rear and cultivate the flowers and fruits of the garden which had been allotted to us.

The arrival of a governess, who came from Paris, to direct the education of my sister, for I gave her no other name, tended rather to confirm than to interrupt our intimacy. Continually wearied by the noisy and disorderly manners of my brother, and attracted by my more studious disposition, Mademoiselle de Formont endeavoured not less to separate her pupil from the young count, than to promote her friendship for the chevalier. Could I now, with the more critical eye of maturer years, behold our governess as she then appeared to us, I know not if I should still be as deeply impressed with her beauty and charms. However that may be, I then admired and loved her with unspeakable tenderness. Her calm and gentle manners won my affections from the very first day; and if ever I unfortunately exposed myself to her displeasure, one single word of reproof from her would throw a deep and enduring gloom upon my spirits. Never did I venture to tell her how much I cherished and respected her; never has she known how often in my dreams I have since recalled the joys of her enchanting smile, and the chilling terrors of her frown; how often I have again beheld the mild beauty of her face, her slender figure, her long *repentirs*, and every detail of her simple but graceful attire. How could she have been aware of it? Childhood has no voice to reveal its dawning passions, nor the treasures of tenderness and devotion which a youthful heart can contain; and later in life, when I had learned how speech can impart what the soul experiences, the unfortunate victim had already atoned upon the scaffold for her unconquered attachment to a proscribed race.

Thus my early youth glided on, happy and tranquil among all those of my generation. I saw little of my father, who passed his whole days in the sports of the field, and his evenings

explaining to his neighbours the errors of the court, and the mistakes of the field-m Marshals in command. I beheld still less often my mother-in-law, whose time was chiefly occupied in making frequent expeditions to Paris, or to Versailles, or in visiting her neighbours about Royaumont. As to my elder brother, he had already left us to join his regiment.

My life was thus entirely spent with Amélie and Mademoiselle de Formont, either in their schoolroom, or in the gardens of the château. Livelier and more intelligent than me, Amélie had less application and tenacity of mind; she would understand before I could what our governess taught us; but she would remember it less accurately, would less eagerly follow up the natural deductions and consequences, and often I had to explain to her in my turn, what at first sight she had comprehended far more quickly than I had. Yet our childish emulation and rivalry to deserve the approbation of Mademoiselle de Formont were exempt from every feeling of irritation or jealousy, and never gave rise between us to the slightest resentment. At this gentle school, I became very learned in writing, geography, and history; but though a noble, and of high extraction, I was not an eldest son, and was not consequently called upon to be entirely ignorant of Latin and mathematics.

These the parish priest of the neighbourhood was commissioned to teach me. Notwithstanding all his efforts, I showed a most invincible aversion for the dead languages; but my taste and aptitude for the more exact sciences so forcibly struck my worthy instructor, that he obtained my father's permission to claim the assistance of one of his friends, a very learned mathematician, whose lessons and counsels have proved of essential service to me through life.

I was not yet ten years old, when one day my father desired me to prepare to accompany him on a journey to Paris, which he had for some time been contemplating. All my finest clothes were immediately packed with the greatest care, and I seated myself by the marquis in his carriage, not without shedding many tears on taking leave of Amélie and Mademoiselle de Formont. I can well remember the length and weariness of that journey, and, still more, the unconquerable feeling of sadness which was aroused within me when I first beheld the great city, with its narrow and loathsome streets, and the care-worn faces of its inhabitants. Never since have I been enabled entirely to overcome that first childish impression of awe and of disgust; and Paris would always have been to me a most unwelcome abode, even were it not for the misfortunes which have since rendered it impossible for me to reside there. On this occasion, however, I only remained there two days with my father, and when we reached Versailles, how great were my surprise and my delight! The court was then in all its splendour; the town was filled with brilliant uniforms and magnificent equipages! *all the learning, all the glory of France was concentrated around the throne, and shed additional lustre on the Palace of our Kings.* The day after our arrival I accompanied my father to the

château. We traversed a long succession of obscure and narrow corridors, meeting at every step officers, ladies, or courtiers, whose costumes surpassed in splendour all that I could have imagined, and we at last reached a small but profusely-decorated apartment. There we saw a lady of extreme beauty, who received my father very affectionately and kissed me several times.

The marquis had conversed with her for about a quarter of an hour, when the door of the room was suddenly thrown open and another lady entered, very simply attired, but followed by four courtiers in full dress. My father attempted to withdraw, but it was too late.

"Perhaps your majesty will allow me to present my cousin, the Marquis de Royaumeont," said the lady who had at first welcomed us.

The queen, for it was she herself, very graciously addressed a few words to my father, and then turning to me, she said:

"O, how pretty he is! Will you kiss me, my child?"

I gazed upon her with a feeling of mingled tenderness and awe, for her air was haughty and imposing; but her soft smile reassured me, and when she bent down towards me, I passed my two arms round her neck. It was thus that I first made acquaintance with the ill-fated Marie Antoinette.

"He really is charming," said she to our cousin—"and if I were you, I would certainly take him as my page to-morrow evening. He is much better looking than the little Bellefonds. Tell me, my child, would you like to be the page of your cousin, Madame de Polignac?"

"I will do anything that you desire, madam," replied I.

"Very well—then I shall send you presently my state dress-maker."

Hardly had we returned to the hotel where we had alighted, than this personage appeared, and took my measure for a page's dress of the time of Louis XII., Madame de Polignac having determined to impersonate a great lady of that age at the ball on the subsequent night.

Never shall I forget the sight which burst upon my view, when, following close upon my lovely cousin, I entered the state apartments of the château. Thousands of wax candles were shedding a lustre both softer and more refulgent than the splendour of the mid-day, upon the vast saloons and matchless galleries of the unrivalled palace; but in the midst of this dazzling array of lights, of precious gems, and of brilliant costumes, the aspect of the young queen principally attracted and fascinated my looks. At first we were unable to approach her; but a little court was soon formed around Madame de Polignac, and boundless were the praises poured forth upon the grace and beauty of her dress. Suddenly we were encountered by a tall woman, whose proud and harsh features struck me as singularly repulsive.

"Well, my dear," said she to my cousin. "So you would not have my son after all. I cannot say that I feel very grateful for the preference that you have shown elsewhere."

Madame de Polignac offered a few words of explanation in the most courteous and good-humoured tone, but she did not succeed in pacifying her friend.

"Pray believe," retorted the latter, "that I do not think the honour conferred upon my child was so very great. But as it appears now that you are never to leave the queen's side, and as she particularly distinguishes every one around you, you might, I should have thought, have given to Auguste, since all had been so settled between us, this opportunity of being noticed. However I say no more, and shall, I trust, be enabled to recover from the shock."

A smile was my cousin's only answer.

A few minutes afterwards we were parted by the crowd, and I was thrust, with some force, close upon Madame de Bellefonds.

"Now then, take care, you impertinent child!" exclaimed she "You are walking upon my gown."

I attempted in vain to draw back, and my hat, which I held in my hand, was soon entangled in the lace of her dress.

"I suppose that you are doing it on purpose now!" continued she, and she struck me very sharply in the face with her fan.

I burst into tears, more from resentment than from pain. Just then the crowd opened suddenly before me, and the queen approached, followed closely by my cousin, who had succeeded in joining her.

"So there you are at last," said Madame de Polignac. "I had lost you.—Well, my dear, what on earth is the matter with you?"

"One would almost fancy that he had been crying," exclaimed the queen. "Is it thus that you amuse yourself at a ball?"

"I was amusing myself very much," replied I, "when that horrible woman came and struck me."

"What on earth is he saying?—what woman can he mean?" inquired the queen, smiling.

"The woman who was speaking just now to my cousin, madam."

"It must be Madame de Bellefonds," replied Madame de Polignac. "She is furious at the preference which your majesty has deigned to show in favour of little Royaumont."

"But that is no reason, my dear, for striking him. This is extremely unbecoming on her part, and I shall most certainly tell her so when I meet her. Just see how red his cheek is. Here, my child, take this to comfort you," continued she, kissing me, and she presented me with a little gold pin which she wore upon her. I have ever since carefully preserved that precious gift, which, even in later years, cost a man his life.

The day after the ball my father took me to see a tall gentleman, whom we found splendidly dressed and surrounded with papers, officers, and clerks. He received us courteously, and promised my father to take good care of me in due time, agreeable to the queen's orders. I have since learnt that he was the Minister of Marine.

Soon afterwards we departed for Royaumont; but my heart could not wholly return to the lonely life of the château. My thoughts were unceasingly wandering back to Versailles, and long

did I again behold in my day-dreams as in my slumbers the splendours which I had witnessed, the fascinating countenance of my cousin, and the more imposing beauty of her august friend. The queen herself had distinguished me, embraced me, protected me. The sweet smile of Mademoiselle de Formont, and the warm affection of Amélie, were no longer sufficient for my imagination and for my soul. I was continually depicting to my sister the wonders of the enchanted abode from which I had been too speedily withdrawn, and it is I myself, alas, who, in the excitement of this childish passion, first inspired her with that love for the court, its splendours, its principles, and its habits, which has since had so fatal an influence upon her judgment and upon her destiny.

Yet were we then deeply and tenderly attached, and if I could conceive far from Royaumeont pleasures greater than those of our ordinary life, I was ever sharing them with Amélie in all my longings and hopes. It was in company with her that I aspired after new journeys to Versailles, new fêtes, and new distinctions; it was she who was to be my companion and my partner when I should receive fresh tokens of my cousin's kindness and of the queen's favour. I remained during several months in this frame of mind, a stranger to the present, and all absorbed in the recollection of that enchanting journey. At length the assiduous care of Mademoiselle de Formont, the tender reproaches of Amélie, and still more, perhaps, my eager taste for my studies, restored me to the entire consciousness of real and practical life.

More than ever, then, Amélie and I were inseparable. We had passed that period of our life when it had been requisite to watch over us with unremitting attention, and we had not yet reached that age when our constant intimacy might have become objectionable or perilous. Our great pleasure, during the fine weather, was to roam together, at the earliest dawn of day, in the gardens and woods of Royaumeont. Those first hours, the loveliest of all, when Nature herself seems to awake and to rejoice, were so many more which we could thus add to our allotted periods of recreation, and to the mutual pleasures of our blissful existence. How often have we thus, hand-in-hand together, beheld the rising of the sun! How often have we contemplated together the wonders upon which he sheds his earlier light, whilst, in accordance with all around us, our hearts would unite and mingle, more and still more, in one celestial harmony! But, alas! the morning of life is not more eternal than the morning of day.

Four years had elapsed since my journey to Versailles, when, one afternoon, my father summoned me into his closet. He informed me that he intended, in a few days, to conduct me to Brest, and present me to one of his cousins, a captain in the navy, who had consented to take me to sea with him. Though long since aware that I was destined to the naval service, I had never yet conceived that the moment for my departure from home could be so near at hand. I answered my father that I was prepared to obey all his orders; but when I again met Amélie, how great were our grief and our despair! Long did we weep in silence; and

kind-hearted Mademoiselle de Formont, having granted my sister a holiday, we retired together, far from the château, that we might abandon ourselves entirely to our sorrow in that solitude which grief will ever seek. There, passing her arm round my neck, Amélie, whose tears were still flowing, promised me her faithful and unalterable affection. Never before had she thus spoken to me, and yet an unknown feeling of doubt and uncertainty, a strange unaccountable foreboding, had seized upon my heart.

"Alas, Amélie," exclaimed I, "when I shall be far away, you will easily forget me, and so many others will surround you."

"Forget you, Edmond," cried she, "how could I? I have never known, I have never loved any but you. When you will return I shall be a woman, and perhaps far away from here; but my heart will never change. You will have no fortune; but mine will be sufficient for us both. Wherever I may be, if you love me still, you will have but to claim me, and I shall be yours for life."

"Neither 'NEVER nor EVER,' Amélie, as Mademoiselle de Formont sometimes says," replied I, mournfully.

"Yes, yes, Edmond, I will NEVER forget you; I will EVER love you. It is you who will rather forget me," continued she. "You will see so many fine ladies in those distant climes; they will fascinate you as those whom you met at Versailles, and you will think no more of your poor Amélie. Here, Edmond, take this little ring, keep it, and wear it always for my sake. You will remember me when you look at it, and I shall always think of you when I shall see it no longer on my finger, which, as you know, it has not left during the last five years."

I accepted with joy this token of our mutual faith; but unable to pass the ring on any of my own fingers, I held it in my hand as we prolonged our melancholy conversation. In the mean time, a storm of rain had overtaken us, and we were obliged to forsake the arbour where we were sitting. Some confusion ensued, and when, after our hasty retreat, we again found ourselves at the château, though I had not, to my knowledge, opened the hand which contained Amélie's ring, her precious present was no longer there.

The rain, which was falling fast, did not prevent my immediately returning, and closely inspecting, step by step, each of the alleys which we had followed from the arbour to the hall; but all my researches were fruitless, the ring could not be found. However great were both our grief and our desire to conceal nothing from Mademoiselle de Formont, we could not venture to impart to her, this time, the cause of our sorrow; but, as if to comfort me in this new affliction, Amélie repeated to me all her promises of faithful and unalterable attachment, and our last days were entirely spent in mutually renewing these assurances and pledges.

At last we were compelled to part; day of more unutterable sadness, than any of those which have been embittered by the misfortunes of my later years. I arrived at Brest, I made acquaintance with my cousin, I visited his frigate, I bade farewell to my father, I left the harbour, still in such a listless and dejected state of mind as to excite the sympathy of all who approached me. But

the paternal care of my captain, the merry remonstrances of my shipmates, and the varied duties of my new life, insensibly restored me to my natural activity, and I applied myself, with the ardour of my age and disposition, to the study and the practice of all that appertained to my profession.

* * * * *

Five years had elapsed since my departure from France. With what joy I returned to Brest; not to remain there a single hour, but to fly to Versailles with the despatches of my commanding officer! I little expected the intelligence which awaited me there.

I learnt at first on arriving, that my father had been dead for more than a year, and that my mother-in-law had quitted Royaumont, to take up her residence in Paris. I proceeded there in all haste, and inquired for her hotel. I entered, without being announced, into the drawing-room. A young lady, tall, fair, of surpassing beauty, and splendidly dressed, was sitting alone, reading the *Gazette*. Our eyes met; I heard a piercing cry of mingled joy and alarm, and Amélie fell senseless in my arms.

"Edmond! What unhopèd-for happiness!" murmured she when restored to perception. "But why remain thus four whole years without writing to me, without answering one of my letters?"

"Your letters, Amélie! I have never received one; and yet, on every occasion, three times a year at least, I have written to you."

"Indeed! So much the better," replied she, sadly. "Then you have not entirely forgotten me. But I must call my mother."

The marquise received me with a cold and constrained manner that surprised me, and such was also the welcome of my brother, who entered the room soon after her. Never should I have recognised the high-bred and graceful colonel of dragoons if I had met him elsewhere. They both pressed me to stay on at the Hotel de Royaumont, and I accordingly took up my residence with them. I was there treated with every mark of courtesy and of attention, and I endeavoured to be happy, but in vain. My mother-in-law, though always extremely civil and ceremonious, testified no sort of cordiality towards me, while Amélie, pale, absent, and pensive, seemed ever to be avoiding me. Fruitlessly did I attempt to elicit from her some new token of the more than sisterly affection which, in her first welcome, she had evinced. She seemed each day at my approach to grow more distant and reserved, and she avoided or repelled every allusion to the memory of our childhood or to the tender intimacy of our younger years.

One morning I found her alone in the drawing-room. Long had I sought for an occasion thus to meet her. I seized her hand, and pressing it to my lips:

"Amélie," said I, "that is a beautiful ring. Do you ever think of the day when we lost your former one together?"

She hastily withdrew her hand, and burst into tears.

"You weep," said I. "Is that recollection then so painful,

"Edmond," cried she, springing to her feet, "never speak of those days to me. I cannot tell you all; but a victim to that fatal fortune which I have inherited from my uncle, I am not so guilty as I must appear."

"Good God, Amélie! what can you mean?"

"Yes, Edmund. Heaven and earth, and all whom it was my duty to respect and to obey, have been leagued together against us. You have returned too late."

"Too late!"

"Yes, too late. Cannot you see what is going on here?"

"Going on here?"

"Yes, here. I am engaged; almost betrothed."

"Betrothed! Merciful Heaven! and to my brother!"

I felt every passion in hell burning within my heart, but the convulsive sobs of Amélie arrested my reproaches.

Cursed day! may the remembrance of it be for ever blotted out. Within forty-eight hours I was at the Bastille, convicted of having challenged my own brother.

I was treated in my prison with much civility and attention, and I had no reason to complain of this lonely confinement. Of what use could my liberty have been to me, at a moment when my reason seemed gone?

After some hours of frantic excitement, I so far recovered my senses as to rejoice in a restraint which had precluded me from committing the fearful and useless crime which I had contemplated. Soon a state of deep dejection succeeded to the first wild ravings of my despair.

During my five long years of exile one single thought, ever present to my mind, had sustained me amid the trials and perils of my adventurous life; the hope, the confidence, that upon my return to France I should find Amélie still as constant, still as devoted as myself, still ready, as she had so solemnly promised me, to unite her destiny to mine. Never had I conceived, never had I dreamed of another issue; and once this all-absorbing expectation destroyed, my life itself had lost its aim and its charm. I was then not yet twenty; at that age sorrows of this description are deep and durable. Month followed month, and my grief remained all unabated.

One morning my keeper entered and informed me that I was free again. Free! what joy in that intelligence to so many others; but for me, accustomed as I had grown to give way entirely to my affliction, I could not contemplate without apprehension the necessity of being again called upon to take my share in the cares and occupations of an active life. I abandoned, without one sentiment of pleasure, the peaceful retreat where my soul had been allowed to commune exclusively with its own misery; and when I again found myself in the noisy streets of the vast capital, I felt bewildered and stunned by the confusion which on all sides surrounded and pressed upon me.

I repaired first to the house of my father's solicitor, the worthy M. Delorme, whose friendship has always proved so valuable to us

all. He informed me that, two months before, Amélie's marriage with my brother had been concluded, and that soon afterwards the young couple had retired to Royaumont with my mother-in-law. He also delivered to me a letter from the marquise, announcing to me that the minister of marine had evinced much interest in my behalf, and recommending me to apply to him for employment. This advice, notwithstanding the quarter from which it proceeded, appeared to me most rational, and I determined to follow it, anxious as I was above all things to fly from France, and to seek for oblivion of the past far from the land which must ever recall such fatal recollections.

Before starting, however, I was desirous of visiting Paris, with which I was scarcely acquainted. I therefore spent a few days in inspecting the streets, the public buildings, the theatres, and the cafés, and I thus mingled in the numerous groups which daily crowded all the public places. I was astonished and alarmed at the excited and licentious tone of the general conversation, at the inconceivable hatred for the past, and the feverish enthusiasm for an unknown future, which were every day more loudly expressed. I could neither comprehend nor share in the frantic hatreds and infatuations of those whom I addressed, and yet I could well feel that the very earth was trembling beneath me.

One day particularly the heat was intense, and I was slowly wandering down the line of the Boulevards, when my attention was arrested by every symptom of the most extraordinary agitation.

The entire population was in arms, and rushing in the direction of the Bastille. I allowed myself to be borne on with the crowd, and I thus assisted at the siege and destruction of my old prison.

Whilst, absorbed in the gloomiest forebodings, I was contemplating these memorable proceedings, the man who had been my jailor, and who had, doubtless, like so many others on that day, betrayed his duty, recognised me, and pointed me out to the groups which surrounded us, as one of the victims of regal despotism. I was immediately seized, saluted by the wildest acclamations, and soon carried in triumph. Happily for me, my resistance was attributed to my modesty, and my sadness to the recollection of my misfortunes. I was sad indeed, for all the frantic rejoicings which I beheld appeared to me the infallible prognostics of the most awful alternations, and I could already foresee a long series of oppressions in the ecstasies of that terrific fraternity.

Soon afterwards I departed, but not without having once more seen the queen. How lovely she still was, but what sadness now in her haughty look, what a long tale of woe could already be traced upon her majestic brow! She received me with great kindness, showed me that she was aware of all I had lately suffered, and again promised me her never-failing protection.

* * * * *

My long illness had obliged me to land at Toulon, and I was but slowly and tediously recovering, when a letter from M. Delorme informed me of the death of my brother, who had been killed in *duel at Coblenz*. Our excellent solicitor urged me, at the same

time, to join him immediately in Paris, so as to secure the inheritance which had now devolved upon me; and, with his assistance, I succeeded in entering into possession of my estates, notwithstanding the arbitrary measures then decreed and already in operation with respect to the property of emigrants. I took, in conjunction with M. Delorme, all steps necessary for securing to Amélie, who had remained in Germany, the regular payment of her jointure, as well as an unlimited credit upon the whole of my fortune, and I proceeded to Royaumont as soon as circumstances would permit.

Thanks to the attachment of our tenants, and of the peasantry around, the château and the domain had been preserved from the effects of the revolutionary convulsion, and I found that they had suffered as little as I could well have expected during the years that had elapsed since I had last seen them. I beheld again, with an unspeakable feeling of reverence and affection, the peaceful abode of my childhood, the spot where those years had elapsed which, even to recall now, was the greatest rapture that my mind could enjoy. When the faithful steward opened before me the long-deserted apartments, I desired him at once to conduct me to the little study, where my soul had at first been awakened to the feeling of intellectual life, under the gentle guidance of Mademoiselle de Formont. Nothing in that room was altered, no one having used it since the day when it had been forsaken by the pupil and the mistress, as they parted for ever. I beheld our table, our little chairs, our books, our desks; I reassembled them all; I found a childish joy in distributing them around me as of yore; and later, when I had completed my establishment at the château, I would often, in the long summer mornings, forsake the state apartments to retire alone into this room.

There the recollections which my imagination recalled would in their turn so forcibly take possession of my mind, that the remembrance of the years which I had spent far from Royaumont seemed effaced entirely from my thoughts. I fancied myself again in the days of my childhood; I thought that I could again hear the well-beloved voice of Mademoiselle de Formont, and at times I imagined that I could see even Amélie herself. Yes, I have there beheld her again, not as I had last seen her, in the splendid apparel of her heartless treachery, but as she was wont to appear to me of yore, when she would rush to meet me, entreat me to fly from the heat of the mid-day sun under the shade of the woods of Royaumont, or to gather the varied flowers, with which we would deck our happy retreat. Thus was my life spent in unceasing communion with the past. I was reckoned, as I was aware, both by my neighbours and my servants, to be scarcely in my right mind. But what were to me the judgments of men? I required no other occupation, and I should have been almost happy if the awful intelligence from Paris had not plunged me into continual affliction.

Every day since the death of the king, the abyss had been widened; and the queen, she whom I had seen so lovely, so fascinating, the idol of the past, and the hope of the future, Maria

Antoinette herself was on the point of being dragged before the ignoble tribunal which claimed the right of judging her for having reigned. I could not withstand my ardent desire of returning to Paris, to ascertain whether, at the sacrifice of my life, I could make, with any chance of success, some effort for her rescue.

A long conversation which I had with Delorme, still the same, although now a member of the Convention, convinced me of the uselessness of any such attempt. Alas! I should only have succeeded in compromising still more the unfortunate captive. I waited in Paris until the fatal sentence had been passed, and then I rushed away, so as to preserve, as long as possible, some hope that the last dread crime would not be consummated. Happy are the causes that have made such martyrs! they become imperishable in the hearts of men!

I was surprised on re-entering, after this absence, the court of my château, to find there a travelling carriage. The steward informed me that a strange lady, having previously ascertained that no one was then residing at Royaumont, had asked permission to walk through the house and gardens. In former times, similar visits had been very frequent, but though of late they had become rare, I had not altered the orders which had always been given, to receive with the greatest courtesy all strangers who might express a desire to see the house or grounds. Having been assured that these orders had been complied with in this instance, and that the lady was inspecting the château, I repaired to the garden. Some letters had been delivered to me, and I sat down to read them in the arbour where Amélie and I had wept so often together, during the mournful days which had preceded our separation. Having looked over them all, I rose to leave my favourite seat; but hardly had I withdrawn from it, when the strange lady stood before me. Upon seeing me, she started back in dismay; but it was already too late: our eyes met, and I recognised Amélie. Pale as death, she leant against a tree. I approached to support her, and I heard these words:—

“Heaven is my witness, Edmond, that I have not sought this interview: I had been assured that you were far from here.”

“You have long since taught me, Amélie,” replied I sadly, “how completely you have forgotten me.”

“You misunderstand me,” returned she, “or you would not speak to me thus. I am unworthy, I well know, to appear before you, and yet I do not deserve to be reckoned by you entirely insensible and heartless. God knows how my conscience has avenged you, since the fatal hour when we parted.”

“Never speak of the past, Amélie; it is irrevocable, and you were perfectly free to dispose of your destiny as you thought fit. Tell me rather that you are happy, as far as it is possible in such times.”

“Happy!” replied she sadly. “It is here alone that I have known happiness, and I therefore could not travel through France without coming to cast one last look on Royaumont, and bid me

last farewell to its cherished scenes. Yet I solemnly declare, that I should never have approached it if I could have thought that you were here."

Anxious above all things to calm the agitation into which she had been thrown by our unexpected meeting, I entreated her to sit down by me, and to inform me of all her plans. Alarmed at the state of Germany, which was daily becoming more unsettled by revolutionary ideas, and by the progress of the war, she had determined to proceed to England, there to seek the most peaceful refuge which the world could then afford, and such was her destination, when, yielding to an unconquerable desire, she had turned aside from her road, once more to visit Royaumeont.

After a few moments' conversation, Amélie arose to leave me; but yielding to my repeated entreaties, she consented to remain a few hours with me, and we re-entered the château together. Already all constraint had vanished between us. At each step we lighted upon some remembrance or token of that love which had been my very life, and which Amélie herself had never succeeded in entirely banishing from her heart. She had visited, before my arrival, the state apartments, but she had not yet seen the small study, the key of which I always myself kept. We entered it together, and overcome at last by the sight which she then beheld, she fell on her knees, and her tears were succeeded by convulsive sobs.

"You seem surprised," said I to her, "to see that everything here recalls the past; what would you say could my whole life and soul be thus laid open before you?"

Ere long she smiled again, and insensibly our conversation led us back to every recollection and circumstance of our past life. Then all was explained. I learned how, by unsparingly using their authority and influence upon a heart naturally gentle and confiding, my father first, and afterwards my mother-in-law, had succeeded in withdrawing the affections of Amélie from me, and in prevailing upon her to restore the fallen fortunes of the family, by marrying my brother.

Yet never had I been completely forgotten; and an intuitive perception of the latent preference which she had ever cherished for me, had so irritated her husband against Amélie, that, with the harshness of his disposition, he had cruelly made his wretched victim expiate the fatal concession which had been wrung from her by our parents. All this, and far more, I should have long since learned, had it not been that Amélie, having discovered that her first letters, as well as my own, were continually intercepted, had relinquished her perilous and useless correspondence.

Notwithstanding her deep mourning, and the expression of sadness which I could well trace in her soft eyes and in her subdued smile, my sister-in-law had never appeared to me more lovely. Scarcely was I again seated by her side in the enchanting solitude of the château, than I fell at her feet, and the whole *tales of my passion* was poured forth. Night was drawing on, and Amélie once more arose to leave me; but it was now too late for her, as well as for me.

"No!" exclaimed I, "Amélie, you cannot forsake me thus. You will stay, my angel, my life, to see once more, with me, the sun rise upon the turrets of Royaumeont; to stray once more with me in those woods where all that surrounded us first taught us to love. I claim one day, one single day, and if you then can leave me, I shall well see that your heart is not like mine."

At daybreak on the following morning I knocked at Amélie's door, and found my sister quite ready, as of yore, to accompany me. The weather was magnificent, and the October sun was shining with unusual splendour.

After a long walk we re-entered the arbour where we had met on the preceding day. We had been there conversing together for some minutes, when we were interrupted by a gardener, who, while working in an adjoining alley, which had long been abandoned, had picked up a small ring, which he lost no time in delivering to me.

When we were again alone, Amélie's eyes no longer met mine; but her heart responded to her lover's, and I felt the hand which I was grasping trembling within mine like a leaf before the wind.

"Amélie," said I, passing the ring on the extremity of the slender finger which I raised, "this time it is Heaven itself which sends it to us."

From that hour our souls were mingled, and the dream of our life was realized.

* * * * *

Eight days had elapsed, and I was slowly walking with Amélie, now mine indeed, when suddenly she clung wildly to my arm, and exclaimed—

"Edmond, they are coming, they are coming!"

"What can be the matter, my angel?" said I, deeply amazed at the state of terror and excitement in which I beheld her.

"You do not hear them, then?" continued she. "I was sure they would come. Ah! if we had but quitted Royaumeont from the first day, as I have not ceased to wish, without venturing to say so. They will spare no one in France now that they have murdered the poor queen. Surely, you must hear them!"

I listened, and it was but too true. Confused and appalling sounds were more distinctly audible; and soon the gardener and the steward, pale with terror, rushed forward to meet us, and informed us that a gang of miscreants had taken possession of the château. Recommending Amélie to the care of my faithful servants, I hastened towards the house, but already the saloon was crowded with a savage mob, who came, as they said, to take legal possession of it. I inquired who was their leader. I was shown a half-intoxicated wretch, who declared himself to be clerk to the mayor of a small neighbouring town.

In vain did I attempt to obtain some information from him: the villains who surrounded him drowned my voice with their cries and imprecations

I wore, as usual, the little pin in the shape of a *fleur-de-lys*, which the queen had formerly given to me. Excited by the clamours of his followers, the clerk attempted to tear it from me. I seized a pistol that he held in his hand, and laid him dead at my feet.

His followers for a moment stepped back in dismay; but how could I struggle alone against a whole gang? My sword rid me of two more assailants; but soon, overcome by numbers, I was disarmed and fettered. Amélie, who had rushed after me, in vain attempted to calm the fury of the ruffians. I was torn away and placed upon a light cart, which had conveyed to Royaumont the clerk and his principal attendants, and I was thus conducted to Angoulême amid the grossest insults and the most shameful acts of violence. There I was interrogated by a personage who styled himself a representative of the people. This dignitary immediately promised my head to my accusers; but no sooner had he dismissed them, than he approached me and said—

"This is a devilish bad business, my good friend. If I manage to get you sent on to Paris, I suppose the job won't be worth less than twenty thousand francs?"

"Never mind me," answered I; "but I promise you thirty thousand if you manage to save my wife, who was torn from me at Royaumont."

He assured me that he would do his best, and I gave him the address of Delorme as a security for my faithfully fulfilling my part in the stipulated condition. At nightfall I was led to a travelling carriage, and as I was entering it, a young man approached me and whispered in my ear—

"Above all things make no resistance; the representative will not lose sight of anything that interests you."

Thus, and under the escort of two armed men, was I conducted to Paris, and deposited at the Abbaye.

Oh! how far more rigorous did the prisons of liberty appear to me than the dungeons of despotism! Everything that surrounded me wounded my sight and my heart; but could I complain? I shared the fate of all those whom I had most respected and loved! I found in a corner of my room the following words inscribed in pencil on the wall—

"LIBERTÉ DU MAL :"
 "ÉGALITÉ DE MISÈRE :"
 "FRATERNITÉ DE CAÏN."

Never have I since forgotten that faithful motto of the times. Still, the friendship of the worthy Delorme remained unaltered. It is true that he owed his fortune to my family; but the remembrance of any similar circumstance was then very rare, and I had already learned that in revolutionary periods the highest minds alone are capable of the most ordinary virtues. Be that as it may, the very day after my arrival, my excellent friend had managed to find access to me. I informed him of all that had occurred. He assured me that I need have no apprehension as to the fate of Amélie,

and that he would not cease to watch over her until she should have left the French soil.

As to me, Delorme led me to understand that I should probably be condemned to death; but that his influence, and that portion of my fortune which he had still in his hands, would suffice, he had every reason to hope, to secure my pardon and safe deliverance.

I was accordingly, within two months, conducted before the revolutionary tribunal. There, by one of those errors which were often voluntary at that time, all the circumstances of my brother's life were attributed to me. Thus was I convicted, not only of having murdered a Republican functionary while in the exercise of his duty, but of having emigrated, of having borne arms against France, and of having excited her enemies against her. Scarcely was I allowed to pronounce a short defence, to which no one listened; and I was then condemned to death; but the faithful Delorme kept his word, and on the following day I was free again. I could hardly believe in such an issue; but events had pressed so fast upon me, that I had no time for reflection.

I rushed in all haste to my protector's house, and threw myself into his arms; but ere I had thanked him on my own account, I anxiously interrogated him as to Amélie's fate. He again protested that I might rest perfectly satisfied; that she had been at first conducted, like me, to Paris, but that he had with his own eyes seen the order signed for her release, and that she had been accompanied as far as Calais by a most trustworthy man, whose return might now at any moment be expected. I made every arrangement to follow her to England, and then, worn out by so many conflicting emotions, I went out to breathe the fresh air.

Scarcely had I reached the street when I fell in with a crowd of people, who were hurrying towards the Place Louis XV. I could well guess the object of this disorderly procession; and unable to resist the wish of beholding once, with my own eyes, the too celebrated guillotine, I allowed myself to be led on by the numbers which were pressing more and more closely around me. Soon we were at the foot of the scaffold, and I was driven upon the very pikes and bayonets of the sans-culottes who were surrounding and guarding it. I made every effort to retire, but it was now too late. The loud stampings of the tricoteuses, who were sitting in every direction upon the place, and the boisterous cheers of the populace, soon warned me that the fatal cart was approaching. It passed along, not far from me; and I could not behold, without a deep feeling of awe, those victims whose fate I should have shared on that very day, had Delorme's friendship been less active and less efficient.

Three men first sprang upon the scaffold. Their dress, their appearance, and the indomitable pride of their bearing, well showed that they belonged to the highest and most cruelly-persecuted class. I recognised one among them—it was my cousin, with whom I had first gone to sea, and who had watched over my childhood with a paternal tenderness. A moment afterwards he was

no more, and a young woman was replacing him on the funereal ladder. Oh! that figure, that bearing, that air! But her eyes are half closed, and she turns aside her head with a shudder of dismay, from the sight of the bleeding corpses around her.

Suddenly, at the approach of the last awful moment, she raises her head, and looks around.

Divine justice, thy reign is ended upon earth! It was Amélie herself. One piercing cry,—one cry of mingled and unspeakable joy, and love, and despair,—which ran through my heart like a dagger, informed me that I had been recognised. Then the executioners seized her, dragged her away, and I could distinguish nothing more.

When I was restored to my senses, I was surrounded by a few kind-hearted persons, who were assisting me, and inquiring where I resided. I mentioned Delorme's house; and no sooner was I again there, than I collected all my remaining strength to inform him of what I had beheld. He positively maintained that my eyes must have deceived me; that Amélie was most certainly far away from Paris, and even from France; and soon the man who had been commissioned to accompany my sister-in-law to Calais was shown in to us. My excellent friend desired him to repeat more than once to me how he had himself seen the lady who had been intrusted to him safely on board the ship which was to convey her away; but I well felt that my heart and my eyes had not been mistaken. I pressed my questions hard upon the new-comer, and soon the faithful Delorme heard, with scarcely less horror than myself, that the person whom he had contributed to save was short and dark.

He rushed in all haste to the Conciergerie, and there the whole fearful mystery was soon revealed. Bought over, in his turn, by a disconsolate and once-powerful family, the guardian of the prison had consented to liberate, in the place of Amélie, and upon the order which had been obtained for her release, a young companion of her captivity. Thus my wretched sister-in-law had been first led before the revolutionary tribunal, and in consequence of some imprudent letters from her husband, which had been found upon her, condemned to death for having conspired against the Republic; then finally dragged to the scaffold, with no further respite than was generally allowed after similar sentences. To the last moment she might still have been saved, but the wretched victim was as ignorant of the address of her protectors as they were themselves of the fatal error which was to cost her her life. So long as the complete conviction of my awful misfortune had not been acquired, my strength still supported me; it then forsook me, and I lost, amid the ravings of a violent brain-fever, the exact recollection, if not the entire consciousness, of my irreparable loss.

After a weary and painful illness, the assiduous care of my friends recalled me to life; but my heart was broken, and my health was gone. Though my property had all been sequestered, *I felt an unconquerable desire to return to Royaumont, and often*

did I impart this wish to Delorme, but as often did he seek to change the conversation.

At last I determined to leave Paris, and to visit my estates. When informed of this resolution, my excellent friend attempted no longer to conceal from me the whole sad truth. The château had been, not entirely demolished, but completely pillaged. The woods had been cut down; no vestige of the park or the garden now remained, and the ploughshare had furrowed the soil up to the very windows, regardless of one of the rarest *chef-d'œuvres* of Le Nôtre. Delorme implored me to spare myself the afflicting sight of my desolated patrimony, and I yielded to his friendly voice, in avoiding any opportunity of contemplating it with my own eyes.

I therefore prolonged my stay in Paris, and it was then that I made acquaintance with the young General Buonaparte, who had commanded with much distinction the artillery at the siege of Toulon. He often came to Delorme's house, with Barras, Salicetti, and other friends. He from the first showed much affection for me; and if he did not succeed in communicating to my soul the fire which burned in his own, and that ardour of genius which will infallibly lead him to the first rank, he at least prevailed upon me, by his unceasing counsels, not to drag on upon earth a useless existence. It was through his influence that I re-entered the navy, and that I obtained the command of a frigate, that I might seek, far from France, that death which is ever flying from me.

* * * * *

CHAPTER XX.

Perchance she died in youth, and may be bowed
By sorrows heavier than the ponderous tomb
That weighs upon her gentle dust!—BYRON.

A FEW days after this incident, as early one fine morning I ascended the deck, I was accosted by Royaumont, who, taking me to leeward, asked me if I recognised the low blue line of coast which was now distinctly visible.

"Can it be England?" exclaimed I, as the unbidden tear started into my eyes.

"It is indeed," replied he. "You see that I have brought you pretty safe. Now, as I cannot stay here long, you must jump into the first of these fishing-vessels that we shall come up with, and think no more of your friend Royaumont."

"That will be impossible," said I. "The debt of gratitude that I owe you, for all the acts of kindness by which you have not only saved, but preserved my life, can never be forgotten, as long as that life endures. No words could express what I now feel; but I know that between us they are not required, for we understand each other."

He pressed my hand affectionately, but silently, and I proceeded to prepare for my departure from the Cornaline.

As I was particularly anxious to read my own epitaph and to see how far the memory of the long-lost midshipman might yet survive among those to whom his heart was still so faithful, I determined upon landing and making my way to Elmswater in the disguise of a common sea-boy. I, therefore, notwithstanding the pressing offer and entreaties of Royaumont, requested his leave merely to carry with me one sailor's suit, a change of linen, and two or three guineas.

After standing in towards the land during the whole morning, we fell in with a large fishing-boat, which, never suspecting the presence of an enemy there, made no attempt to avoid us. I hailed her from the deck, and soon ascertained that, for a trifling sum, she would wear round and set me down on shore. As parting with those to whom I am attached, or with whom I have long associated, has ever been to me a moment of the acutest suffering, I hurried over this farewell as speedily as I could. Royaumont affectionately embraced me, according to the custom of his country; the officers shook me cordially by the hand; the men gave me a hearty cheer, and I sprang into the British boat. The captain once more waved me, from the deck, his last adieu, and then resumed his solitary walk, while the Cornaline again stood out to sea.

I found that my countrymen were not grown more loquacious during my absence. They made no attempt to converse with me; but this was well in accordance with my own mood, as I watched the noble vessel, to which I felt bound by so many ties, fast receding in the offing.

The shore was now close at hand; through the sultry haze of the summer morning, I could distinguish the white cottages spread over the gently-wooded coast. As we ran nearer and nearer in, I remained silent and motionless; but when at length the heavy boat was lodged upon the dry strand, when springing from her, I stepped upon the glittering beach, I fell upon my knees, and burying my head in the rude shingles, pressed them wildly to my lips. Oh! that I had never shed any other tears than those of that hour!

Having settled with my conductors, I, for the first time, inquired in what part of the coast I had been landed, and which was the nearest town.

I was informed that we were a very few miles to the eastward of Plymouth.

"Indeed," said I, "then we cannot be very far from Ashton."

"Ashton? That road to the right will take you there in the course of the afternoon."

Unable to resist the pleasure of visiting that well-remembered spot, I determined to proceed there at once. O, that walk, by the hedge-girt roads, winding among the blooming gardens, the peaceful villages, and the stately parks of my native land! With what joy the prodigal child again trod thy well-beloved shore, happy,

happy England ! That was indeed a memorable day in my blighted and fitful existence, redeeming in its pure and silent rapture all the sufferings of my five years' exile.

When I had walked for about an hour, I was overtaken by a coach.

"Do you go through Ashton," said I to the driver.

"Certainly. Be there in less than an hour."

Springing up behind him I was borne rapidly along, and, rather within the prescribed time, the coachman, turning round and showing me a distant village, said :

"There you are !—Wish to be set down there ?"

"Yes, by the school."

In a few minutes we stopped. It was the exact spot where I had bid farewell to Thornton.

The house, the grounds, all seemed very much as I had left them. I moved slowly up to the hall door of the private house, but my heart beat so violently that for a moment I was unable to pull the bell. At last, the summons was given, and a servant appeared.

"Is Doctor Wentworth at home, pray ?" said I.

"Dr. Wentworth ?"

"Yes, Dr. Wentworth. Is he at home ?"

"Don't live here," answered the servant, preparing to close the door.

"Well, but this is still Ashton School ?" continued I.

"It is."

"And who keeps it now ?"

"Dr. Mills."

"How long has he been here ?"

"Two years, I believe."

"When did Doctor Wentworth leave ?"

"I can't say. I never heard of him before. You had better inquire about him in the town," replied the domestic, who, hearing a bell from within, was now very anxious to retire.

"Much obliged," said I, and I withdrew in the direction of the village, to obtain some further information there.

On the way, not many hundred yards to the left of the road, lay the parish church, and I felt irresistibly moved to visit once more the spot where I had so often strayed to escape from the noisy precincts of the school.

The church was situated on the slope of a gentle eminence, from the summit of which an extensive view of the neighbourhood was commanded. I soon discerned, behind the well-known steeple, a lofty elm, which had been a favourite resting-place of Thornton and myself. I rapidly ascended the acclivity and reached the foot of this tree. He at least stood unaltered in his stately loneliness, but the soil around had been sorely disturbed, for death had not neglected its work during my absence. The enclosure of the rural cemetery, which formerly had run at the foot of this tree, was now carried rather beyond it, and many a village grave was strewn all around.

One of these particularly attracted my attention. It had been

raised at some expense; a handsome tomb of cut stone had been erected; it had been enclosed with a low railing of ironwork, and a few shrubs had been reared around it, evidently with great care. Of late, however, it must have been deserted and neglected, for the abandoned plants were wildly throwing out their shoots, concealing nearly the whole of the epitaph, which, exposed besides to the rude sea gales, was now hardly discernible. I read, however, in letters more prominent and less obliterated than the rest, the words—*Requiescat in pace.*

I had been too long in Catholic countries to be much alarmed by this inscription. I stepped over the low railing, and, sitting upon the verdant grave: "Poor departed being," murmured I, "I shall not, I trust, disturb thy eternal repose if I rest for a moment by this thy still mindful abode."

How forcibly in that hour the memory of the days that were no more pressed upon my thoughts. There lay beneath me those scenes which, during my weary years of sickness and of exile, fancy had so often restored to my view in their unforgotten loveliness. There were the very fields where I had strayed with Thornton while he unfolded to my eager mind the mysteries of the universe. There was the glorious ocean which we claimed already for our home, and on whose boundless expanse we were wont to track our adventurous career.

But where was he at whose voice the fire of intelligence and ambition had first been kindled within me; and she, that other being, for whom my heart had beat with a more heavenly and still deeper affection? Thornton slept well in the warrior's early grave, which he had so ardently sought; but surely no peril could have beset the smooth path of Mrs. Wentworth's life: and where was she?

Insensibly my wandering thoughts returned to the objects more immediately around me. I remarked that on the summit of the tombstone close to me, an urn, half covered by a veil, had been sculptured, and that some words had been inscribed there apart from the epitaph below. Slowly rising, I examined this inscription, which ran thus:—

In thy long sleep I'll watch thee as of yore,
Until life fails, and then we'll part no more,—
O death, thy worst is done, and thy next blow
Will join the hearts which thou hast severed now!

I do not know what Thornton, had he been there, would have said to these lines; but as I was neither a poet nor a critic, and as they seemed to me to have flowed from the heart, they powerfully arrested my attention. I felt curious to know who was the being so truly mourned for, and to whom this allegiance of the soul was thus pledged through time and eternity. I carefully parted the tangled branches of wild clematis which had grown up round the tombstone, that I might discover the frail memorial which still marked the identity of the dead.

"God of Heaven, that name!"

I sprang back in an agony of dismay. Why was the life-blood thus chilled to my very heart? Why did I bury my head in the long damp grass as if to destroy the fatal power of sight? It could not be her; so young, so lovely, so beloved!

I again raised my eyes, and summoning the utmost energy of my will, proceeded to read, word by word, the whole of the epitaph. It was but too true: one glance had, with fearful rapidity and precision, revealed all! The simple inscription was as follows:—

Sacred to the Memory of ISABELLA OSBORNE,
Wife of the Rev. Thomas Wentworth,
Head Master of Ashton School,
Born 1769; Died 1797."

I hid my face in my hands, and in an agony of grief, cursed the day that had brought me back to England to hear this tale. Yet I could not, I would not believe it. I appealed to the pure vault of heaven, to the lifeless earth, to the cold tombstone, against this doom. I called aloud to the departed spirit itself, as if it still could hear the voice of my despair, and still could commune with my heart.

"Mrs. Wentworth! dear, first-beloved Isabella, it is I Rockingham your victim, Edward, your cherished favourite! Is this the welcome that you have prepared for your schoolboy lover when he is returned to tell you of all his adventures, his sorrows, and his perils? Have you no smile to greet the wanderer home; not one tear left even for his wounds? See, they are no longer the slight bruises of his playground fights, but the deep, the indelible scars of manly and mortal conflict!"

But the dark grave was listless and unmoved. Alas! on the stream of life there is no ebb and no return. In vain we sigh for the days that are past; they revisit us no more.

After the first paroxysm of my grief was over, I was restored to calmer and more rational feelings. I could not but remember that, much as I loved Mrs. Wentworth, and much as I had cherished the hope of seeing her again, there were others in England to whom my heart was bound by stronger ties of affection and duty. Rising at length, I slowly and sadly wended my way to Ashton, and there, at the shop of the village baker, I ascertained the sad particulars. In the very year of my expedition to Teneriffe, Mrs. Wentworth had been attacked by a brain fever, of which she had died, after a very few day's illness. Her husband had been so disconsolate at her loss, that, after struggling ineffectually against his grief, he had resigned the direction of the school, and retired with Dr. Osborne into a distant part of the country.

I rested that night at the small inn at Ashton, and on the following day proceeded to Plymouth, where I arrived in time for the mail, which was to convey me to the gate of Elmswater park.

CHAPTER XXI.

I sleep, but my heart waketh. It is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled, for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night.—CANTICLE.

So soon as from my exalted seat, immediately behind the coachman, I could discern the lofty woods of the domain, I alighted from the mail, considering that it would be more in character to reach my destination on foot.

While proceeding along the well-remembered road, I heard the distant sounds of a carriage fast overtaking me from behind. It approached; I recognised the yellow barouche, the two postilions in blue, the two outriders. My heart beat so high that my breath failed! I was constrained to pause, and I receded into the very hedge as the vehicle passed me. I could distinguish an elderly man; his hair was very nearly white, but his stately bearing was unaltered. By him a young lady, almost a woman now; and how lovely that face! In the front of the barouche, opposite to them, a young man, pre-eminently handsome. I could well discern his features, as, from the fast-advancing carriage, he fixed upon me for a moment his stern and haughty glance. It was but for a moment, for the three were conversing cheerfully together, and I could even overhear the elder person's laugh. And why should they not be joyful? Years have now elapsed since the last tear was shed which the early-doomed midshipman could claim.

They have driven swiftly by. I am alone again.

The God of heaven be praised: all I most love are well and happy!

Ere the carriage which conveyed them was out of sight, it appeared to me to stop, a cloud of dust arose, and I could see the two outriders dismount. I moved hastily forward to offer my assistance, and found that one of the wheelers had fallen, and was kicking furiously in his harness. My brother had sprung out of the barouche, and, with characteristic intrepidity, was attempting to raise the affrighted animal.

"Now, look sharp here, one of you," exclaimed he to the terrified attendants. "Cut the traces, cannot you? What the d—l are you afraid of?"

One man ventured forward, but he received a kick from the fallen horse, and staggered back.

"What shall we do, Elmswater—had we not better get down?" cried the young lady from the carriage.

"Not for the world. Do stay quiet," was the impatient answer.

"I wish to God some one would but just cut the traces."

I now thought it time to come forward, and, with my long clasp-knife, soon accomplished the required operation, not, however, without receiving in my turn a rather severe kick.

"Now, young fellow," said Elmswater, "as you are the only man here, just give me a hand in moving this horse away."

I assisted as he desired. He then ordered the grooms to take away the leaders, and to replace the fallen horse with one of them, as a pair would do perfectly for returning to the castle.

Lord Arlingford and his niece now descended for a moment, and approached to thank me for my exertions. As the shades of evening were beginning to darken upon us, and as my broad hat was drawn over my eyes, I trusted that I should not then be recognised, and was not deceived.

"I fear you have been hurt," said Sophia. "I heard the kick from the carriage."

"Oh! it is nothing to signify, ma'am," answered I, assuming the tone and manner which were most in character.

"Here, my man, there is something for you," said my father.

"Thank you, sir, much obliged," replied I, accepting the guinea he proffered.

"You are a sailor, no doubt," continued he; "have you seen much service?"

"Yes, sir. I have been knocked about pretty well."

"Were you ever in action?"

"Yes, sir; at St. Vincent, and at Teneriffe."

"Ah, Teneriffe, indeed?" said Lord Arlingford sadly.

"The carriage is ready again, sir, and I suppose we had better move on now," here exclaimed Elmswater; and then in a lower tone, he asked his father if he had given me something.

"Yes, it's all right," said the marquis. "Now, Sophia."

But she whom he thus addressed had not been an unconcerned listener to the few words I had uttered, and was already in deep and earnest conversation with me.

"What was your ship at Teneriffe?"

"The Sea-horse."

"Did you ever see the Culloden?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Were you on board of her?"

"No, ma'am."

"Did you ever hear of an officer whose name was Edward—Lord Edward Rockingham?"

"Yes, ma'am. I believe there was a young midshipman of that name killed at Santa Cruz."

"Killed!"

"So they say, ma'am. I myself saw him still on the shore when our last boat put off, and he never returned with the prisoners after the exchange."

"But you do not know positively that he was killed?"

"No, ma'am. I have even heard say that he was only wounded, and was saved; but I scarcely believe it."

"Still, you have heard that report. Where was it, and when?"

"A year afterwards, at Madeira."

"Now then, Sophia, we really must be moving," again exclaimed

Lord Arlingford, who in the mean time had been inspecting, with Elmswater, the wounded horse.

"Here I am, my dear uncle," cried my cousin; and then whispering to me, she said:—"Come up as soon as you can to the castle. Say you have my orders—Miss Waldegrave's orders—to speak with the housekeeper, and I will see you again in the course of the evening."

The party now resumed their seats, and, wishing me a good night, drove on towards the house.

As I did not require much persuasion to act up to Sophia's injunctions, I followed quickly in the same direction. I was soon at the gate of the park. It was still open, but an old man was standing by it, and I recognised my faithful Richards. To avoid premature detection, I hurried by, muttering something about the young lady's orders.

"Ah, you may go; all birds of your feather are welcome here," was the answer; and I moved on.

I ascended the gentle acclivity of the approach at a rapid pace: my heart was so full, that I feared it would again betray me. I beheld the stately deer-park, still crowded with its graceful occupants, not as I had often seen it in the fitful dreams of my desolate exile, but opening before me in its real and living grandeur. There is the old lime-avenue, planted under the direction of Charles II. himself; there are the gardens; there—there is the house. I can go no further. Surely, a few minutes' delay is of no consequence now.

I again fell on my knees—I again and again pressed my lips to the ground. What was I to that cold and senseless earth? It had no tears for my early doom—no fresh smile for my unlooked-for return; and yet how my heart clung to that sacred soil,—the cradle of all my feelings, the goal of all my hopes,—my haven, my home!

It was dark before I reached the stable-yard, but I required no light to guide me through the intricate mazes of the offices to the door of the housekeeper's room. There I knocked, and was desired to enter. As it was necessary for me now to remove my hat, I had, with a view of more effectually disguising myself, tied a black silk handkerchief round my head; thus concealing my brow and one of my eyes.

"I suppose you are the young man that Miss Waldegrave is expecting?" said the housekeeper, as soon as I was in her presence. "Very well; sit down over there till she sends for you."

I obeyed the order of this portly personage, who, as I was happy to see, was a new acquisition made by the household during my absence.

"So you were at—— I can never remember the name of the place where the young lord was killed," said she to me, after a few minutes of solemn silence.

"*Teneriffe, madam.* I was there."

"I suppose it is a long way off?"

"*Indeed it is, ma'am.*"

"A sad thing that death was, to be sure."

"Yes, ma'am; but it is no such uncommon occurrence in time of war. I do not suppose it can have made much sensation here."

"Well, I don't know. The first tidings came just after I settled here from the duke's. His lordship was very sad for a time, and so was the young earl, and the great ball was put off, and there was mourning allowed to the upper servants. Still, it was not, of course, as if it had been the young earl neither, who, thank God, is very well."

"And now, I suppose, it is all forgotten?"

"Forgotten! ah, to be sure! Such is the way of the world. We can't be always a-crying after the dead; and, indeed, the parson says it would not be right. There are two people here, though, who think sometimes of the poor boy, as I believe."

"Indeed! who are they?"

"Why, one is old Richards, the sailor; but he has nothing else to do, except to mind his gate and to talk about the old sailor lord who was an admiral, and the young sailor lord who was to have been one."

"And who may the other person be?"

My companion here assumed a most mysterious and confidential look, and, after a moment's pause, rejoined:—

"I suppose I may as well tell you, as you are to see her presently. It's, as I believe, Miss Sophia herself. Poor thing, in my opinion she never has quite got over the shock to this day. My gracious! what a scene it was to be sure when the paper was brought. The—the report they call it, I believe. It is so named on account of the guns they fire, as the under-butler explained to me."

"And so Miss Waldegrave was much affected when the Admiralty report was known here?"

"That you may say she was, indeed. She is not, you see, like other young girls, going off into hysterics, and all that. But she was so pale and altered—oh dear! and then there was the sea-side, and Cheltenham, and the Lord knows what, to revive her."

"However, she is quite recovered now?"

"O, yes; I should hope so. Still, as you'll see, she is much moved at all that comes from the fleet, and always hoping that some day or other her cousin may return; as if the dead ever came back, except sometimes at night, and then not for long."

"Sometimes at night, and then not for long," muttered I to myself, as if there were something prophetic in this sentence.

We were here interrupted by the entrance of a pretty-looking lady's-maid, who, upon seeing me, desired me to follow her immediately to the library, where her young lady was waiting with the intention of doing me the honour of speaking to me.

"And mind," added she, when we were in the passage, "that you don't presume to stand too near her, or to say a word to her, except in answer to what she says."

Thus admonished, I was ushered into the library, which opened on one side, as I well remembered, into the dining-room, and on

the other into a small sitting-room containing a valuable collection of engravings and manuscripts.

"That will do, Jones," said my cousin to her maid as we entered. "Just go into the print-room, and wait there until I call you."

The library was lit by two candles placed upon a table, behind the spot where I now stood. I could, therefore, without exposing my features to Sophia's view, clearly distinguish her face, the beauty of which surpassed all my dreams and expectations.

"I have felt anxious to see you again," she softly said, when we were alone, "as you appeared to me to have some information to impart with respect to the fate of—the officer I mentioned to you, and who was to me as a brother.—I think I understood you to say, that you actually saw him, during the landing at Teneriffe?"

"Yes, ma'am," answered I, still disguising my voice to the utmost. "I was in the boat with Captain Freemantle when he pushed off from the shore, and I heard him distinctly call to Lord Edward Rockingham, and insist upon his coming on board."

"And my cousin refused?"

"He was attempting to remove the body of another officer who had been badly wounded, and he could not be persuaded to leave him, until they were surrounded by the enemy, and then we could see him no longer."

"But you heard at Madeira, a report that he had not been killed?"

"Yes, ma'am—that is to say, a ship came in from Santa Cruz; and her boatswain told me, one evening, that there had been a young English midshipman saved, and he a lord too, and that he was still living at Teneriffe."

"Still living in the island? Did he tell you how, and with whom?"

"Why, ma'am, by your leave, they say that a great Spanish lady of the place had saved his life, and that it was in her house he was established."

A slight cloud here crossed, for an instant, Miss Waldegrave's brow; but she continued her inquiries in the same anxious tone.

"When had you this conversation you mention?"

"More than two years ago, ma'am."

"And what is the longest time that a vessel might take coming from Teneriffe hither?"

"Why, ma'am, they could hardly be more than three months, except some accident happened."

"Exactly; but many accidents might occur, which might considerably delay the return home?"

"Why yes, ma'am; the ship might be wrecked."

"To be sure," said Sophia, with a slight shudder. "But it might also be captured by cruisers."

"Oh, certainly, ma'am, and then a person might be taken to a very distant part of the world, and have to work his way home as he could, afterwards."

"And two or three years' delay would not be so very strange?"

"Lord bless you, ma'am, to be sure not. Why, I knowed a man, who was captured by a man-of-war, almost within sight of the

coast of Portugal, and taken off all the way round the world. But, somehow or other, men will find their way back when there is an object."

"When there is an object?" repeated my cousin, thoughtfully.

"Yes, ma'am, with your leave, we sailors is often forgotten at home. But sometimes there is people as will remember us in all our travels, and when we know that, ma'am, why the whole seas over our heads would not prevent our coming back to join them."

"Well, but should you not say, from what you were told at Madeira, as also from your own experience in these matters, that we may still look, some day, to hear of Lord Edward's return?"

"Why, ma'am, I should indeed say, that if he thought there was a person here, as may be yourself, by your leave, as was anxious to see him again, there's nothing could well prevent his coming back from any distance."

"Alas!" uttered Sophia, in a tone of the deepest despondency, "if affection could recall him, he would have been here long since."

"And it must, it will!" exclaimed I, unable any longer to restrain the feelings which swelled my breast. "From the fiercest conflict of the battle, from the most hopeless extremity of shipwreck, from the furthestmost recess of the globe, that affection will recall and conduct him hither, or I know nothing of a sailor's heart."

"Who are you?" cried Sophia, starting back. "Your voice, your manner, your language are entirely altered. As you wish for God's grace, torture me with no further doubt and uncertainty: say all you know, and what you are."

"If your heart does not recognise me, Sophia, then it is still more altered than I am," exclaimed I, withdrawing the handkerchief from my brow, as I clasped her in my arms.

From the deep anxiety which my cousin's eyes had revealed, during our short dialogue, I had felt some apprehension as the moment approached for casting off my assumed character, and I had endeavoured to the uttermost to prepare her for the intelligence I had to impart. But the wild shriek of mingled terror and joy which now burst from her, surpassed all that I could have anticipated, and appalled me beyond expression. The cry was repeated once and again, and both her arms were cast round my neck.

"I always said it," she exclaimed, "I always knew it, Edward, that you would return to me again!" Our lips met in one convulsive embrace, and then I felt the slender arm gliding from my shoulder, and but for my support, the graceful form would have fallen lifeless to the floor.

Scarcely had I deposited there my gentle burden, when the faithful Jones, attracted by the voice of her mistress, rushed into the room. Great was her alarm, but far greater still was her indignation at the sight she beheld.

"You shocking impudence, you villanous wretch!" screamed out the incensed attendant. "What do you mean by it? Get up *immediately*, or I will tear your eyes out myself!"

"It is all right, my dear," answered I, calmly. "Take care your turn does not come next, and just help me to raise Miss Waldegrave's head."

But by this time, Sophia's beaming eye was again open, again fixed upon me. Once more our lips met; and then raising herself slowly, but with a matchless grace and dignity,

"I must not forget the others!" she said, and she rushed to the dining-room door:

"Uncle Arlingford,—Elmswater, joy—joy—joy! He is come, he is safe, he is here again! . . . I always told you so, I always knew it! Come—come—come!"

"Who?—what?—my dear Sophia, have you lost your senses?" answered my father.

But I was now myself within the dining-room, where he was sitting alone with my brother.

"There he is," continued the breathless Sophia. "It was he who cut the traces. My heart flew to him the moment I saw him on the road, though I should never have known him, he is grown so much taller and—darker."

I was now locked in my father's embrace, and fast fell his tears as he pressed to his heart his long-lost son.

Elmswater's welcome was also very cordial, and both seemed equally surprised at my height and more manly appearance.

"Who could have thought it?" exclaimed my father at last. "Can this be Edward! But now, I recognise him again. How like his poor mother he still is, though his complexion is bronzed by foreign skies and climes? Do you know, Elmswater, I think he will be a match for you after all!"

I was now again seated at my father's table, and many and anxious were the inquiries as to my adventures during my long absence. The letter that I had written from Teneriffe to my father, and another that I had despatched from Manilla, never yet having been received, I had a long tale to tell ere I could give a correct outline of the events which had so much delayed my return home. But nothing could satisfy Sophia's longing for every circumstance and detail of my voyages and life since we had last met; and at each allusion I was called upon to make to the perils from which it had been my good fortune to escape, I saw a slight shudder creep over her frame, or a tear of sympathy dim the lustre of her dark eye.

At length, it was my turn to interrogate, and I ascertained that Lady Sheerness and everybody connected with the family were quite well, excepting poor Julie, who had died two years before.

"How handsome the park and the castle are looking," said I to my father, "and yet the rooms appear to be less large than they were formerly. How well I recollect this dining-room and every picture in it; but let me see, that portrait of my grandfather used not to be there over the chimneypiece: there was a Virgin there, with her child, and how heavenly was the look she was casting upon Him!"

I here observed my father to sigh deeply and to exchange a

melancholy glance with Elmswater ; but Sophia immediately flew to the rescue.

"Some of the pictures have been moved and exchanged," said she hastily ; "but you will see to-morrow how much improved the flower-garden is. Uncle Arlingford has given it up entirely to me, and you must assist me with your foreign notions in carrying out some great plans that I have been devising. I suppose that you are up with the sun now ; we must take our walk before breakfast every day while this fine weather lasts."

Thus we conversed until long past midnight, still protracting the raptures of that joyful meeting, and fearful, as it were, again to part, though already the happy, happy morrow was at hand.

CHAPTER XXII.

Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse : Thou hast ravished my heart with one look of thine eye, with one chain of thy neck.—CANTICLE.

On the following day, Elmswater, who was now in Parliament, was obliged to return to town. My whole morning was passed in the gardens with Sophia, whose eagerness to be informed of all my adventures was far from being satisfied by the account I had given on the previous night, and in the afternoon we both rode out with Lord Arlingford. Thus each succeeding hour was passed in the exclusive enjoyment of our own society, uninterrupted by the arrival of any visitor.

I have always considered the first month which elapsed after my return to Elmswater, as the happiest period of my life. All my fondest expectations, and even the unhopèd-for visions and longings of my ardent imagination, were now fulfilled and accomplished. I was not, as during my enchanted stay at Orotava, aroused at times by a painful sense of duties unperformed, and of affections reclaiming me far away. All that I had desired, all that I could wish for was now granted, and my soul revelled freely in pure and unmingled bliss. I have too often since repined at the trials and sufferings which it has been my fate to undergo ; but never, even in the hapless hours when I have cursed the fatal boon of existence, never have I forgotten that life has afforded to me hours of such transcendent enjoyment, that, though so transient and so sadly fleeting, they were indeed worthy of being lived for. Among these, none have surpassed, none could ever surpass, those that I have just recalled, even had that dream, the wildest of my heart in its wildest mood, been then realized by her who always has been the object and the end of my being.

If any such feelings as these would at times arise within me, they were in no way conveyed to her who imparted them, by any act or any thought dependent upon my own will. On the first morning *after my return home*, when Sophia entered the room in all the un-

conscious pride of her youth and beauty I gazed upon her with a sentiment in which respect and devotion far overpowered any more tender or more daring impulse. I wondered how I could have found courage, on the previous night, to clasp her in my arms, and to press her lips to mine; and from that day, saving in one future hour of surpassing sadness, I never once attempted, during my stay at Elmswater, though she was ever at my side, to call back that fast-fled moment of forgetfulness.

When the session of Parliament and the London season were over, Lady Sheerness and Elmswater arrived at the castle. Their presence unavoidably cast some restraint upon my constant and unreserved intimacy with Sophia; but we were both now freer agents than of yore, and the deep sympathy which seemed almost instinctively to allure our minds into the same congenial occupations and pursuits still led us into continual intercourse. Sophia drew remarkably well, and with much natural and acquired taste. In this art I was myself rather proficient; and so deep an impression had the narrative of my adventures, and the description of the countries I had visited, made upon my cousin's mind, that she insisted upon retracing with me, from some slight sketches I had preserved, all the principal scenes and events of my life. In the conception and progress of this album, my father himself took a great interest, and it was carried out by Sophia with the most unremitting zeal.

She was besides passionately fond of music, and as I was, one day, when believing myself to be quite alone, unfortunately betrayed into singing one of my Spanish ballads, I was so peremptorily commanded by my cousin to repeat it, and many others which I was told I must also know, that nothing but implicit submission was possible. As I was aware that no man who wears a sword should even be suspected of singing, or of having any knowledge of music, I reserved my Spanish airs for Sophia alone; but when positively ordered by her to repeat them, I found a mysterious pleasure in the compliance, which proceeded, I believe, neither from the melody itself, nor from the satisfaction of obedience. Dolores had well selected these ballads which could best convey the feelings to which they alluded, and I followed up to my utmost the lessons I had received from her. Music is the language of the soul, as speech is the language of the mind, the one imparting what we feel, as the other expresses what we think; but how surpassingly that idiom of the heart can render what words dare not utter, and thought scarcely ventures to conceive!

I had naturally felt, from the first, very anxious to ascertain precisely on what terms Miss Waldegrave lived with the other members of the family. I was not long in discovering that Lord Arlingford was beloved and respected by her with even more than filial tenderness. This could in no way surprise me, as there was a singular charm about my father, whenever he endeavoured to please or to captivate, and as the attentions he bestowed on the education and welfare of his niece were certainly most unremitting. *With Elmswater, Sophia's manner was perfectly free and uncon-*

strained, and exhibited every mark of sisterly affection and confidence. This also appeared to me very natural; but I was rather astonished to observe the total change which had occurred in my cousin's feelings and bearing towards Lady Sheerness. All traces of her former spirit of childish insubordination had now vanished, and nothing could exceed the extreme deference and attachment which she manifested towards our stately aunt.

"You and Lady Sheerness seems to me very great allies now," said I one day to my cousin, anxious to be satisfied on this point by her own testimony.

"We are indeed," answered she; "I am wiser now than when you were here last. I have discovered that she has a most wonderful knowledge and experience of the world, and is the safest counsellor and guide that I could have."

"More so than my father, do you think?"

"Far more, I believe, in matters with which it is most interesting and necessary for me to be fully conversant; and this, I think, is Lord Arlingford's own opinion."

"So she is no longer harsh and unfair to you, as in former days?"

"Oh, no! nothing can exceed her good-nature and indulgence to me now, except of course those of your father, who is indeed more than a father to me."

"Well, I am ashamed to say that there is something cold and stern in Lady Sheerness's manner, in which I cannot sympathise more now than formerly."

"I know what you mean. We all have our faults, and that may be hers; but I believe that there is no one who stand higher in society, and who exercises greater influence there than she does. This, ever since I have come to years of reflection, has led me to place great reliance on her opinion and advice."

"Is she still as fond of Elmswater as she used to be?"

"Oh, more than ever, I think, and so proud of him too, which is very natural: he is so handsome, so noble-looking, so highly gifted."

"He is indeed well qualified to bear the titles and honours of the family."

"And he is so brave also. I have heard that, both at Eton and Oxford, he was reckoned the most dauntless of all, and was always called upon to lead in every rash and desperate adventure. I shall never forget one day when we went to see the Meet and he passed us at the head of the field."

Though these praises were bestowed upon Elmswater in no other tone and with no other expression of countenance than those of an affectionate sister, I felt my heart sink unaccountably as I listened to them, and Royaumont's story painfully recurred to my mind. Still, while I most attentively watched Miss Waldegrave's manner towards myself and my brother respectively, I could find no motive to despond or to repine. Though Sophia evidently looked upon Elmswater as her highest authority in everything connected with *sports, the stables, and the household arrangements*, there appeared

to be no intercourse whatsoever between them upon the subjects which most deeply interested her mind—literature, the fine arts, and every species of romantic conception and enterprize.

"What I would give," did she frequently say to me, "if I could sail over the wide seas and visit all those splendid regions where you have been staying. Those who have seen England alone have but read the first page of that great book which is open before us."

"Ay, Sophia," would I answer, "but it is not every one that can rest contented and happy merely because the sun shines. Your imagination would lead you far from home; and yet, I fear, that nurtured and educated as you have ever been, the pleasure you would derive in beholding these scenes, would scarcely repay you for the privations and fatigue you must necessarily undergo."

"I think they would a thousand times, though I must admit that, until I have tried, I cannot positively affirm it."

In this misgiving, Miss Waldegrave was, I believe, fully justified. Whether from her natural disposition, or from the effects of the great and almost lavish expenditure with which her education had been conducted, she certainly had an extreme taste for every species of luxury and refinement. Indeed, they had become almost a requirement for her mind, as well as for her person; and if I could discern a fault in her free, noble, and generous nature, it was perhaps an undue regard for external and adventitious circumstances, and for everything more exclusively connected with the habits and pursuits of the higher orders of society. This tendency was, of course, most sedulously cultivated, not only by Lady Sheerness, but by the conversation of Lord Arlingford and my elder brother, so that any less essentially aristocratic sentiments which I might have imbibed during my travels and residence in foreign countries, found scarcely more sympathy with Sophia than with the other members of the family.

It has always been my untaught and unbidden impulse to protest against all exaggerated or prejudiced notions, and to uphold, with some warmth, all principles and feelings which have appeared to me equitable and just. As I was one day alluding to the singularly refined and generous traits which I had observed in the character of some of the seamen on board the Culloden, I was interrupted with some asperity by Lady Sheerness.

"My dear Edward," said she, "no one has more than you the outward appearance of a gentleman, but it is really singular how you seem to delight in seeking in another sphere for subjects of admiration and regard. I wish we could give you more taste for your own natural associates."

"I must own, my dear aunt, that I do judge men as I find them; looking less to their circumstances and stations, than to their minds and qualities."

"This is heresy, indeed," said Sophia, though evidently more in jest than in earnest: "we must cure him of this if he stays some time with us."

"Or rather," said my father, "we will teach him, that upon the

whole, the noblest and most exalted sentiments will be found among those who have learned to cherish them as a double duty that they owe, the one to themselves, the other to their situation in life."

"That is exactly it," said Sophia. "I really think there are some things which I should be tempted to do, were I not restrained by the feeling that they would be peculiarly unbecoming in my station."

"But surely, Sophia," said I, "we might tutor our minds to respect ourselves fully as much as the position we may have to sustain?"

"The few among us who may be gifted to the extent of a Seneca or a Plato," answered my father, "might doubtless adopt with success that principle; but I still think that those who, by birth, or any other fortuitous circumstance, chance to be peculiarly prominent in their generation, must very naturally derive a new and special incentive to everything that is honourable and great, from the very consciousness of their rank and of the additional duties it entails. '*Noblesse oblige*,' as our neighbours used well to say before they had broken down every bulwark and barrier of civilized society: and that is a sentiment which I think we can cultivate and proclaim with benefit to ourselves, and without any injury to others."

"*La nature humaine oblige*," thought I to myself; but, secretly discouraged by receiving no support from Sophia, I then, as on many similar occasions, suffered the controversy to drop.

I have sometimes, I must admit, doubted whether, when thus secretly impelled to advocate what I considered to be the more liberal notions and principles, I was inspired wholly by a regard for the generality of mankind, or whether I was not almost unconsciously endeavouring to promote my own cause in my as yet unacknowledged rivalry with my brother. Alas! for the weakness of human nature; with what subtlety will self-interest insinuate its influence over the doctrines we embrace, however enlarged, or however exclusive, whether they tend to further the views of a class with which we are connected, or of the community to whom we belong! Had I, in the first pangs of my incipient jealousy, apprehended that Sophia's affections might be fixed upon a person who, in the eyes of the world, would have been regarded as my inferior, would my sympathies for the less favoured orders of society have been equally felt and proclaimed?

Towards the end of August, a large party assembled at Elmswater for the assizes, and many persons eminent in the legal profession and in the political world, were invited to be my father's guests on this occasion. Though I much regretted the tranquil enjoyments of our family party, I could not but be interested by the manners and conversation of the people with whom I thus became acquainted. As yet, I had had no sort of experience or knowledge of society, and my thoughts had dwelt merely upon matters connected with my profession, my travels, or the wanderings of my own imagination. I now began to perceive that there were more things in this nature than my philosophy had ever

dreamed of, and perplexed by the novelty and variety of the subjects upon which the general discourse turned, I felt myself strange, diffident, and as it were alone in the midst of the busy and animated circle around me.

The conversation of the judges and of the lawyers, the surprising facility with which they wielded the mysterious power of language, the depth of thought and of information which was revealed in every word that fell from them, peculiarly arrested my attention. I then learned that the singular and as yet to me unaccountable influence which the voice of Thornton had exercised over my mind had been reduced not merely to an art but to an important science, in which great study could supply and even surpass the original gifts of nature.

I remember an evening in particular, when, in consequence of some festive anniversary, several toasts were given, and responded to at some length. My father, who was not an unpractised speaker, proposed the health of the king in a short but dignified address. The navy was soon given, and I was called upon to answer. My heart beat so vehemently, as I saw all eyes fixed upon me, that I was too happy to escape with a few very indifferently-delivered sentences. When the judges of England were named, one of them arose. Never shall I forget the magic effect of his deep and melodious voice, as he detailed the duties he was called upon and endeavoured to perform, and the awful responsibilities which weighed upon him. All to me was new, all unthought of, and a secret misgiving arose within me, that I had been allured by the enthusiasm of Thornton into a profession inferior to more than one other in distinction and in honour.

The members of the House of Commons were subsequently proposed, and Elmswater responded. Doubtless was he well prepared for the occasion both by former practice and by recent reflection; but how different was his slow, simple, impressive delivery from the hurried accents and faltering voice with which I had uttered my feeble address. I listened first in astonishment, then in admiration, and so led away was I by the power of human speech, that I felt as if I could already myself have answered otherwise and far better than before, had I been again called upon to make the attempt.

In the evening, Sophia approached me, and said to me, smiling, "I hear that your speech was not quite so good as Elmswater's; you should practise a little, as that has, I believe, very much to do with it."

"Yes," answered I, rather despondingly, "but what can be said of the navy?"

"What can be said of the navy! Why everything that is great and noble."

"Ah!" replied I; "that may be the opinion of some generous hearts like yours; but we are not the less strangers at home, *unconnected* with the tastes, pursuits, and, saving upon some few *though momentous* occasions, with the destinies of the country at large."

"Say not so," exclaimed my cousin; "it would be unjust to England to harbour such a thought!"

"And will you, Sophia, answer for the feelings of our countrymen?"

"No! Englishmen must here vindicate themselves," answered she, smiling. "I reserve my advocacy for those who may be truly reckoned ever to require protection."

"And for those you will answer?" said I, gazing intently into her bright and beaming eye.

"I can, and will," said she, fervently, and yet with an expression so deeply ingenuous, that I felt brotherly gratitude to be the only feeling with which I could be justified in responding to that which inspired her. She was not satisfied, however, with the consolation she had thus ministered; and I could not but remark, during that evening, and the subsequent days, that any person who addressed me, after having had an opportunity of conversing for some time with Miss Waldegrave, was singularly acquainted with my life and adventures.

Sophia had not yet then been presented at Court, and consequently was not what is called "out," in London society. Still her perfect self-possession and dignified grace, as well as the modest though unabashed demeanour with which she received the universal homage she was born to exact, were very remarkable; and while they added to the admiration she so deservedly inspired, they also, as I could not but admit, told very highly in favour of the assiduous care and attention bestowed upon her by Lady Sheerness.

One evening, while the party was still assembled at Elmsnater, as I entered the drawing-room before dinner, I observed Lord Arlingford in close and very friendly conversation with a new visitor who had just arrived. As I approached, I heard my father say, looking my way, "I do not think that you know him," and then calling me, he presented me to this person, whose name I understood to be Sir William Thornton.

"This must be Thornton's brother," thought I, as I grasped the hand which was extended to me, and my impression was confirmed by many observations made by Sir William as he sat by me at dinner.

"May I ask if you have any brothers?" said I, as soon as we were better acquainted.

"I have two now."

"And had you not one killed?"

"Yes, indeed," answered he sadly, "and a cruel loss it was to us."

"I knew him well," said I, and none have mourned for him more truly than I have."

Perceiving that the subject was as painful to my father's guest as to myself, I made no further allusion to it, nor, indeed, to that profession so fatally selected for both by the enthusiastic companion of my boyhood.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Ben.—Be ruled by me, forget to think of her.

Rom.—O, teach me how I should forget to think.

Ben.—By giving liberty unto thine eyes :

Examine other beauties.

Rom.—'Tis the way

To call hers, exquisite, in question more :

These happy masks, that kiss fair ladies' brows,

Being black, put us in mind they hide the fair.

He that is stricken blind cannot forget

The precious treasure of his eyesight lost.

Show me a mistress that is passing fair ;

What doth her beauty serve, but as a note

Where I may read, who passed that passing fair ?

Farewell, thou canst not teach me to forget.

ROMEO AND JULIET.

AMONG the visitors who arrived at Elmswater Castle about this time, none attracted so much attention and homage as Lady Edward Onslow, whose husband was a nephew of the late Lord Sheerness. She was deservedly admired for her beauty and her powers of conversation, and though her manners certainly revealed a full share of the levity which the fashion of the day authorized, they were singularly high-bred and prepossessing. She came alone, her husband being then shooting in Scotland, but her temporary widowhood seemed in no degree to weigh upon her spirits, and she soon became the life and soul of the whole party. When I first beheld her entering the drawing-room, surrounded by a host of admirers, I felt as if I never could muster sufficient courage to address her. Scarcely, however, had I been presented to her, than I found something so natural, so animated, and so inspiring in her manner, that all diffidence soon vanished, and I was far less embarrassed by the side of the haughty woman of fashion, than with the timid and reserved ladies of the neighbourhood.

Reckoning, I suppose, that I was as yet *sans conséquence*, Lady Edward distinguished me particularly in the crowd of *soupirants* who followed in her train, and she would voluntarily bestow upon me many slight marks of her favour, which were far more eagerly sought by more conspicuous competitors.

"Here am I," said she, one evening, "the only lady in the room without a flower."

Several gentlemen immediately stepped forward, each offering the one he wore in his button-hole.

Lady Edward gazed round with a look of the most tantalizing hesitation, and then said :

"The prettiest is Lord Edward Rockingham's ; but that, it appears, I am not to have."

Mine was, indeed, a carnation of great beauty, which Sophia had herself brought back from the flower-garden for me. Though

I had at first certainly given no sort of indication of any wish to part with this flower, I now saw that, out of mere civility, I must make the *offrande*, and the carnation was soon transferred, first, to Lady Edward's hand, and then to her slender *corsage*.

Though flattered by this little mark of distinction, I felt singular regret, and something even kindred to remorse, at thus disposing of my cousin's gift. For some time I scarcely ventured to approach Sophia, but later in the evening we were brought together.

"Why, my poor Edward, you have lost your flower," said she, and she immediately gave me the one which she was wearing exactly where Lady Edward had placed mine.

There was something so affectionate and so artless in my cousin's manner, that it moved me to the heart, and I deeply vowed never again to incur the self-approach to which I had just subjected myself.

I suppose that my feelings were not so well dissembled as to escape the penetrating glance of Lady Edward's blue eye, for, as she passed by me soon afterwards, she said, with a very peculiar smile: "You need not look so sad for your flower now, as you have been presented with another."

"I shall never be sad at anything that can give you pleasure," replied I; but I suppose that my voice was not as much in accordance with my words as I could have wished, for she immediately said:

"Take care I don't put that pretty sentiment to the test before long. However, for the present, you deserve a reward and not a new trial, and I must think how I can best recompense you."

"May I choose this reward myself?" inquired I.

"Most decidedly not," answered she, moving on.

The following day the weather was lovely, and scarcely was the breakfast over, when Lady Edward exclaimed:

"You are singular people at Elmswater. You have the most beautiful piece of water of its kind that I have ever seen, and yet you never think of either boating or fishing, which are my two favourite amusements."

"We have boats and tackle in abundance," said my brother, "but I really did not think that it would give you any pleasure to use them. All will be ready in less than half an hour, if you should like either to pull or to sail to the island, near which is our best fishing-ground."

"By all means," answered Lady Edward. "I will be there at the appointed time, with Sophia, I hope, and whoever else wishes to come."

Within half an hour, several of our party were accordingly assembled in the neighbourhood of the shed, which contained four little vessels, a larger and a smaller barge, that carried no canvas, and two sailing-boats, each constructed to bear two persons only. One of the latter was my own original frigate, now carefully repaired and decorated.

"I suppose you will go in one of the barges, Lady Edward?" said Elmswater,

"Not I," replied she. "I am a sailor's daughter, and I will go in that little man-of-war."

"That's my ship," cried I, in great joy, jumping into my frigate, and already offering my arm to my fair prize.

"But those boats only hold two people," observed Elmswater.

"Well, I shall be with Lord Edward, as in duty bound," replied Lady Edward, springing into the boat. "And now, my lord, I will steer," continued she, playfully, "and show you how."

"Will you, indeed, teach me how to shape my course? Of all that I would willingly learn from you, nothing would be more essential."

"Well, I shall perhaps see about that later. In the mean time, how delightful this is, and how far we are shooting before the party in the barge. I own that I do like to take the lead wherever I am, and I should be perfectly happy now were it not for the thoughts of the dreadful scolding that you will get this afternoon."

"I, Lady Edward; who from?"

"Why, not from your father, at all events, I should think, by your deep blush. Well, never mind, cousins soon make it up. I can't wonder at your taste, however, I must own: Sophia Waldegrave is certainly a lovely girl, and if, when we get her to London, we can shake her a little, and persuade her to look a little less demure, she will be very much admired. Now I said that I owed you a reward, and I can repay you, if you please, in a coin which is generally, I must admit, more freely tendered than accepted. Shall I give your inexperience a little bit of advice, as you seemed to wish just now?"

"I shall be to happy to attend to it," said I.

"Then come close to me; take care, even, that the waters do not hear me, and hide your face so that I do not see your blushes again. That's right. Now my advice is, to be careful how you set your affections upon Sophia Waldegrave, until you are quite sure that she positively dislikes your brother! Ah, is that the way you blush? why, you are paler than my pocket-hankerchief. Will you have my smelling-bottle, my poor child?" added she, passing her arm round my neck, as I leant forward, almost prostrate with the shock I had received.

"I see my counsel has not been given too soon, and I trust it has not come too late."

A moment's silence ensued.

"Mind what I say, then," continued my fair torturer; "she must positively dislike him, and she must passionately love you; for if there is any sort of parity in the feelings that she entertains for you both, the scale will weigh heavily in favour of the elder brother, and then woe betide you."

Again there was a silent pause, but it was longer than the former, and it was my turn to break it. I seized the fair hand that rested upon my shoulder, and gazing intensely into the blue eyes of my monitor, which now had assumed the first serious

expression I had ever beheld there, I muttered—"Oh teach me how I should forget to think."

"You will find one answer in the very next line," replied she deliberately; "and if Shakespeare is an authority with you, you can abide by Benvolio's opinion."

"I would sooner be guided by yours," said I.

"Ay, sir, but perhaps I agree rather with Romeo than with his friend, and think that other beauties, and even the black mask itself, when we are very far gone, only remind us the more of the fair face which they endeavour to rival or to disguise."

"The mask that you wear," answered I, "can remind me of nothing save the priceless heart which, I trust, it does not quite conceal."

"It is but a poor mask if it cannot do that. At all events, we soon shall reach that island, and you will soon be again standing at your cousin's side. If then and there you can re-assert that the sight of my hapless face does not still more forcibly recall another of surpassing fairness, perhaps I shall believe that my friendly advice has not come too late. Until then," continued my companion, now withdrawing her arm, "let us think merely of the bright sky, and the lovely blue waters; I fear that they will be almost too clear for fishing."

When we landed, the preparations for our sports were soon made, but now the capricious Lady Edward said she was tired of her lord's society, and insisted upon going into one of the barges, though I had secured the best tackle for our boat.

For more than two hours the fish appeared to absorb the undivided attention of every member of the party. During the sport, I was several times engaged in assisting Sophia, who though very expert in catching the fish, was not always equal to the task of unhooking them; but nothing occurred between us, saving a smiling inquiry on her part whether I had not found the morning very pleasant.

When we were preparing to return, Lady Edward exclaimed, "I suppose we had better go home just as we came; it will give less trouble than any new arrangement."

I was doubtless gazing very intently into her face as, leaning upon me, she re-entered my boat, for she shook her head with a most bewitching smile, and murmured as if to herself—

" 'Tis the way
To call hers, exquisite, in question more."

I was too civil to assent to the aptness of this quotation, though I felt it to be well applied; but taking my seat by Shakespeare's fair pupil, I said, when we were again at some distance from the rest of the party,—

"As you are endowed with the power of divination, and take so kind an interest in my fate, I wish you would answer, to the best of your knowledge, two questions that I am longing to put, you?"

"With pleasure. Mention the first."

"What do you think are Elmswater's feelings for Sophia?"

"Not such at present, I should say, as should very much affect either her or you. And to save you the trouble of stating the second inquiry, I will add that Sophia, who as yet loves you both as brothers, but as brothers only, would be more likely now, should any other feelings arise in her heart, to place them upon you. What is certain, however, is, that such feelings must arise ere long, either for you or for Lord Elmswater. Cousins do not love for ever as brothers and sisters."

It was not the first time that I had heard those words of prophetic warning, and now I well felt their full force.

"And so, my lovely counsellor," replied I, "you still advise me to forget Miss Waldegrave if I can?"

"I do most decidedly, except, as I said before, you can be sure that she actually dislikes Lord Elmswater. Remember my words, for ere long, if I am not mistaken, you will hear more to the same effect, and then perhaps you will not be angry with the singular woman who has thrown a salutary gloom over your spirits to-day."

"You are indeed a singular person, Lady Edward. You speak as if always in jest, and yet each word you utter bears such a solemn import, that we could listen to you for ever without a smile."

"So I have been told before, yet what is all my gift?—a little experience."

When we met in the dining-room that day, Sophia had three flowers in her hand. She as usual gave one to Elmswater, and then presenting the other to me, she said in a very low voice,—

"One for you, and one for Lady Edward."

Though there was nothing peculiarly reproachful in Sophia's look or tone, my heart once more smote me at the gentle remonstrance that was thus conveyed to me, and I answered,—

"I will do as you desire me to-day, but to-morrow give me one only, and I will take care never to lose it again."

The flower was accordingly offered to our fascinating guest, and received as it was presented, without any particular observation. In the course of the evening, as she was alluding to the sports of the day, which she said she had very much enjoyed, Lady Edward particularly enlarged upon the pleasure she had experienced while running so far ahead of the barge.

"You would have gone quicker still," said Elmswater, "had you been in the other sailing-boat."

"I am not very sure," rejoined I, "with the wind we had to-day."

"I am quite sure," retorted my brother.

"Well," rejoined I, "I have tried both the boats since my return, and I think that my old frigate is the swiftest when close upon the wind."

"We have tried the boats fifty times, and the new one has always beat her on every tack."

"Very well, then will you bet, that if to-day's wind holds, which I think very likely by the sunset to-night, with a fair start,

and a fair run, I shall in the frigate reach the island sooner than you do in the new boat?"

"Done, for twenty, fifty, or a hundred, as you please," answered my brother.

"Oh, twenty is all that I can afford."

"And you shall certainly win them," exclaimed Lady Edward. "I will give my adopted frigate the whole advantage of my best wishes, and of my experience too, and will, if you choose, again steer her to victory."

"In that case," returned I, "I may venture to bet more than I am worth."

"No; twenty guineas are enough," said Elmswater. "Sophia will come with me, each lady shall steer and choose her own colour, and the bets will be open till to-morrow at twelve."

The following morning's sun arose most propitiously for the great wager. Elmswater had ordered the boats to be respectively christened with the names of the two rival beauties. The Sophia bearing a red standard, and the Georgina a blue. On our way to the shore, Lady Edward approached me, and observing that I still wore the flower my cousin had given me on the former evening, she said, with the most bewitching smile,—

"I suppose that you will be very happy to give me that pink when I remind you that I have none?"

"Stay one moment and I will get you a fresh one, the best which our parterres afford."

"No, thank you. It is that very one which I particularly wish to have."

"This one! I am under a special vow not to part with it."

"Indeed, then I must have it! What, do you really refuse my request?"

"Not exactly: I make another and far handsomer proposal."

"To which I reply by renewing my original demand. No answer. Very well then, I see it is a positive refusal."

We were now close to the landing-shore, and the company was starting in the barges so as to reach the island in time to witness the arrival, when the wayward Georgina exclaimed,—

"I have changed my mind, Lord Elmswater. I think that your boat will win, and as I would rather not be in the loser, I will go with you; that is, if you will have me, and if Sophia has no objection."

Elmswater assented with the greatest *empressement*, and Sophia requested her guest by all means to select whichever she pleased.

"You, I suppose, are quite indifferent?" said Lady Edward, with a most searching glance.

"I think it but natural and right that here you should have the choice," answered my cousin, in a tone which forbade the renewal of any similar questions.

"I trust, Sophia, you will not regret this change," said I, when seated by her side in the boat.

"I hope you do not," answered she, looking steadfastly at me.

"You say *this*, Sophia, as if you had some doubts."

"I have indeed, Edward; and are they not somewhat justified?"

"You would not say so if you knew what has just occurred between Lady Edward and me."

"How she asked you for that flower, which you refused, and how, upon that, she threw you over, and went with Elmswater?"

"Then you must have heard our conversation," exclaimed I, in great astonishment.

"I—not a word of it; nor do I always require to hear what is said, to know what is going on. However, I am glad that you should be on your guard with Lady Edward, for I believe her to be a very dangerous friend for you."

"Indeed, Sophia."

"I do; and when you have seen as much of her as I have, you will, I am sure, agree with me."

"Well, though her society be so perilous, the danger can be easily avoided, as one look from you will always bring me back to your side."

"At present, perhaps, Edward, but this may not always endure, for sisterly affection, though not less vigilant than any other, has little to offer saving itself. And now that I have said my word of admonition, let us give our utmost attention to the race. I am as determined to win, if possible, as Lady Edward can be herself, and you certainly must not lose it for my company. I am afraid they are rather ahead of us."

"They are, indeed, for the breeze has freshened and veered a little, and with a side wind they have the advantage."

"Well, but we might have more sail, might not we? the other day, with Elmswater, the side of the boat was close upon the water."

"Ay, Sophia, but we sailors are more cautious than landmen, for we know the danger of these little expeditions."

"And you are afraid of being wrecked again?"

"Not afraid, I hope, for I trust I could save you; yet I would rather not try the experiment."

"But, I have not the least objection," said my high-spirited cousin. "See, see, Edward, they are really starting ahead of us; we should go quicker if you tightened that rope a little: Elmswater always fastens it here."

"Ay, but I don't much approve of fastening the sheet, though I will tighten it a little, as you say, if you are not afraid."

"That's right, Edward; a little more, a little more again: we are heading them now, but what is the matter with that other sail there?"

"Ay, there is something wrong in that jib. Can you hold this sheet just while I step forward."

"I will try. No, it is too much for my strength; do pray fasten it for a moment. Never mind the danger: they are again closing upon us."

As our lee gunwale was now cutting the very water's edge, I felt much disinclined to secure the sheet. There being no option, however, I complied with Sophia's wish, and then sprang hastily

forward to re-adjust the jib. Just then, as ill-fortune would have it, a sudden gust swept over the lake, our canvas groaned under the pressure of the wind, and a loud shriek from my cousin announced to me that my misgivings were confirmed. We were both now plunged into deep water, with the boat beating over our heads. My first endeavour was to secure the slender form of Sophia; my second to withdraw her from the neighbourhood of our ill-starred little vessel.

"Cling tight to me, my angel, my life!" cried I. "Place both arms round my neck, and leave mine free. That is right; we shall do very well so."

I now succeeded in again reaching the prostrate boat, and clambering upon the keel with my gentle burden, soon placed her there, by my side, in comparative safety.

"How brave you have been, my fearless Sophia!" exclaimed I. "Had you clasped my arms, we both should have been lost. Thank God! there is no real danger now."

"There is no peril by you, Edward," replied she; "there is something in your look which drives back danger itself."

By this time Elmswater, who, on seeing the accident, had immediately tacked, was close alongside of us, while Lady Edward, pale with terror, inquired how we were?

"Well, you have made a precious mess of it, Edward!" said my brother.

"It is all my fault," cried Sophia; "I would not listen to his advice. But what are we to do now?"

"I see but one thing," said I. "You had better haul down your sail, Elmswater; we will put the two ladies into your boat, and you can jump with me upon this keel, until the barge, which I perceive is now shoving off from the island, can pick us all up. Come along, and mind you don't wet yourself."

"How do you feel, my dear?" said Lady Edward to Sophia, as she was sitting by her side in Elmswater's boat. "I wonder you are not dead with the mere fright."

"Why, it certainly is a more awful moment than I thought, when the waters close and grow dark over our head. I fancied my whole life was flitting before me in that single moment, and I shall never forget what I experienced, when I felt the firm grasp of Edward's arm round my waist, raising me again to the bright surface."

"It must indeed have been a most delightful sensation," said Lady Edward, while her usual smile again played around her lips.

"Well, but who has won?" exclaimed the undaunted Sophia. "I suppose we had better go on with the race."

"Not for the world!" cried I. "We have already been trifling with danger quite enough. I will pay my forfeit, if necessary. But Sophia must immediately return to the castle and change her clothes."

"I believe you are right, Edward, though I am not at all cold." "And as to the wager," rejoined my brother, "it must be a *brawn det.*"

Thus ended our nautical adventures at Elmswater, and two days afterwards our party broke up. As I approached Lady Edward to take leave of her, she drew me aside for a moment, and with a smile of deep meaning, said :—

"You have adopted, I see, the views of Romeo, and not of Benvolio. This is rather what I foresaw, if you will remember, even before you had taught Sophia Waldegrave, in such an impressive manner, the effect produced by your arm around her waist. Still do not forget that Benvolio, doubtless, passed many joyous years after Romeo had been laid in his early grave."

"Ay, Lady Edward; but who has ever inquired as to his fate, while Romeo's end will be the eternal theme of all poets, and for ever our noblest and most exalted example."

"Perhaps so. Then farewell, my Romeo. Beware of the journey to Mantua, and the cemetery of the Capulets."

These words were apparently spoken but in jest, and yet they re-echoed so fearfully upon my heart, that when I pressed her extended hand, Lady Edward started back and said :

"Why, you have changed the play; this is no longer Romeo and Juliet, but Don Juan."

Thus we parted, and we have never since met.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away. For lo! the winter is passed, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth, and the season of the singing-birds is come.—CANTICLE.

In the midst of the pleasures and sports of Elmswater, I had not forgotten my profession, and having, through my father's interest obtained permission to pass my examination at once, I now proceeded for that purpose to Portsmouth. Though I had not served, properly speaking, for more than a year in the navy, the experience and information I had acquired on board the *Cornaline*, still more than on the *Culloden*, had fully prepared me for this ordeal, and I went through it with some *éclat*.

A few days after my return to the castle, my father summoned me into his study for the apparent purpose of showing me a letter, which he had just received from Portsmouth, and which spoke, in high terms of my proficiency.

"I am very happy, indeed, Edward, that you have deserved so flattering a testimonial," said he to me; "and now let me ask you, if it is your intention to follow up your profession actively?"

I answered in the affirmative.

"Well then, do not you believe that you should soon think of going to sea again?"

"Why yes," answered I; "but except you judge otherwise, I do not see any immediate hurry. I have not yet been four months here."

"That is very true; but on the other hand, you must remember, that though so long away from us, you have, in fact, only seen one year's service."

Nothing could be more judicious than my father's suggestions, yet some instinct secretly warned me, that he would scarcely have made them at that moment had he not some other object in view than my professional advancement. I endeavoured to show no indication of this misgiving, but it did not appear entirely to escape my father's observation, for, after a moment's silence, he resumed:

"I am speaking to you, of course, Edward, principally for your own sake, and in your own interest. You shall never hear from me any opinion or any advice, expressed or offered in any other spirit. You will understand me, however, if I add, that there are other motives which might render it desirable that you should not, under present circumstances, prolong too much your stay at Elmswater."

"Indeed," said I, rather haughtily. "Then, if you think so, the sooner I leave it the better, for it is not in my nature to be an unwelcome and unbidden guest anywhere."

"Do not misunderstand me, Edward; and if you doubt my affection for you, you are unjust to me, and to yourself. I have never in my life had a moment of more surpassing happiness than that in which you were restored me. I love and admire your noble and generous disposition, and my fondest hope is, that, in later years, we shall both be very much together. The present however is a very critical moment for the destiny of our family, as for your own; and I, as well as you, have much to consider and to provide for. Do you understand me now, or shall I speak more openly and more fully upon the matter?"

"I would much wish to hear all that you may be willing to impart upon this subject."

"Then sit down, Edward, and I will enter upon it freely. There is a growing attachment arising between you and Sophia, stronger on your part as yet than on hers, but still of such a nature, as to require, even now, serious consideration. Perhaps you have not yet completely ascertained or analyzed your own feelings. However, you must be to a certain extent aware of the point to which such affections tend; now, allow me to ask you, have you ever seriously thought of being some day united to your cousin?"

"I, my dear father?" replied I, much embarrassed at this home question; "I can't say that I have, nor do I think that there is much time lost as yet."

"Well, then, it is neither too late nor too soon for me to say that I should most truly deplore any such conception, and should indeed think myself justified in throwing every obstacle I could in the way of its fulfilment. That you may completely understand the grounds of this very decided opinion, perhaps I had better state them to you summarily; and knowing, as I do, the deep interest you take in the welfare of the family, I feel satisfied that

you will assent to them. Do you remember, Edward, that on the very evening of your return home, you were much struck at missing one of the noblest master-pieces of our hereditary collection? It is not the only one which is no longer here, and I suppose you have guessed the motive."

"I have hardly ventured to inquire, seeing, from my first unguarded observation, that the subject was painful."

"Painful, indeed, to those who feel as I do. What motive do you think, Edward, saving utter necessity and real distress, could have induced me to make these heart-rending sacrifices?"

"Distress!" said I, in the greatest astonishment. "Why, everything at Elmswater seems conducted on the same scale as formerly!"

"Perhaps so, to your unpractised eye, Edward; for it is a matter of policy with me, as well as of inclination, not to let the world into the secrets which my creditors and my children alone must know: but the times have been very hard indeed upon me. Two years ago, as you may have heard, Lloyd, who had been our banker for more than forty years, broke with a large sum of mine in his hands. Then, for the first time since I was of age, the Cressinghams come forward and contest the county; and there is a mint of money which must go to secure Elmswater's return, besides my old suit in chancery with the Worcestershire Rockinghams, which is farther than ever from being settled. I might have expected, from my former services, to receive some office under the Crown, which would at least have enabled me to close my establishment here for a time; but there is Pitt, who chooses to pass such a slight upon me, as to make it impossible for me to serve as long as he is there. Why should I dissemble the fact from you, Edward? Ruin stares me in the face; if you will, not that ruin which will actually drive us to the workhouse, but that which may very well send more than one generation broken-hearted to an early grave."

I could not but be much moved at the tone of deep despondency with which my father revealed this painful intelligence.

"This is sad, indeed," exclaimed I; "but surely, something can be done to avert such a catastrophe?"

"That is the object of all my endeavours," answered my father.

"As to Elmswater, I cannot speak in too high terms of his conduct; and I trust, my dear Edward, that I shall have as much to say of yours. Our principal difficulties consist in our mortgage debts, which amount to upwards of three hundred thousand pounds, making at the present rate an annual sum of more than eighteen thousand pounds, which must be forthcoming in bank-notes to the day before I can defray a single shilling of our expenses here. Could this sum be paid off, the scale would turn considerably in our favour, and thus the fortune of the family might yet be completely redeemed."

"It is a very large sum," said I, thoughtfully.

"Yes, Edward, but Sophia Waldegrave's fortune, after so low a minority, will very nearly come up to that amount by the time

she is of age. If, as I trust, and as we all expect, she marries Elmswater, then, with a little care and good fortune, the Rockinghams may again hold their heads as high as any family within the four seas of Britain."

I was, as I have said, very deeply impressed with all that had that day fallen from my father. I could not but feel, however, that, though fully justified in his present combination, he seemed to make but little allowance for the sentiments of those who might be more or less directly concerned in it, and I was soon led into suggesting something to this effect.

"Understand me well, Edward," said my father, in reply; "there is no one breathing who could be more unwilling than I should be to force or to betray the inclinations of any one around me. Of course, nothing of what I contemplate could be accomplished without the entire freewill and concurrence of every party interested. It is yours that I am now claiming; but until the day comes when I shall have to appeal to Sophia and to Elmswater for theirs, I think I am doing my duty to both in promoting the affections which will naturally, and I may almost say inevitably, spring up between them, if they are constantly thrown together."

"But surely my presence here, during the short intervals of repose from my professional duties, is no obstacle to their intercourse, upon any terms that they may desire, and that you may sanction?"

"More than you think, Edward. Perhaps you are not aware,—except, by the way, Lady Edward Onslow suggested something to that effect when you were in the boat together the other day,—perhaps you are not aware that you are qualified to rival Elmswater himself in fair ladies' affections?"

"Well, but were it so, is it not but natural that Sophia, with her large fortune, which will secure affluence to her, whomsoever she may marry, should be allowed to choose for herself, independently of our family arrangements?"

"Of course, Edward; and when she is arrived at years of discretion, I shall have no power, and, as I have already said, no inclination, to oppose any honourable choice which she may deliberately make. But, in the mean time, as nothing can prevent Elmswater from being a far better match in the eyes of the world than you can ever be, and as he is besides in every way worthy personally of your cousin, I shall consider myself, as every one will consider me, fully justified in encouraging to my utmost the views which I know are entertained by him in common with us all. Think the matter over, my dear Edward, as much as you please, and as much as you can. You will find that I am saying and doing exactly what you would—what every sensible and provident man would do in my position. From all I have seen and known of you, I believe that, upon reflection, you will give me your utmost assistance; if not, why then it will be time for me to consider how I am to act. That will do for to-day, my dear boy; we can short resume this conversation; until then, I need not remind that it must be regarded by both parties as strictly confidential."

When I left my father's study, after this interview, my faculties were in a state of absolute prostration, from which they did not recover during the whole of the day. The more I brooded over this fatal dialogue, the more momentous its import appeared to me for all my future destiny; and although nothing could be more guarded than the language in which Lord Arlingford had stated what he conceived it to be his duty to declare, I could not disguise from myself what was the real substance of his communication. I was the obstacle, as I was to be the victim; my happiness and the interest of the family were in conflict, and so decidedly was the preference given to the latter, that already my very absence from Elmswater was desired.

As I sat that evening in deep dejection by the stately mantel-piece of that noble dining-room, which four short months before I had re-entered in such joyous exultation, I reflected on the many perils and difficulties through which the hope of being seated there once more could alone have sustained me on my adventurous course. I thought of the dark night, when I had raised the sword which fell from the shattered arm of Nelson, and of the still darker day, when on the yard-arm of the Cornaline, I had measured my strength with the fury of the tormenta. I thought of my hopeless shipwreck, of my agonizing wounds, of my weary circumnavigation.

"And this is that life," said I, "for which youth, in its reckless ignorance, has struggled so wildly! Scarcely do the months which I have passed at Elmswater number the years I have spent in unceasing toil to reach it once more, in honour and in credit, and already I am told, by my father himself, that my place is no longer here!"

"How sad you have been the whole evening!" said Sophia to me, as we retired to rest. "Has anything occurred which has given you pain, and for which I cannot comfort you?"

I pressed her hand to my lips, but my heart was too full for utterance at that moment, and she said no more.

On the following day, I observed, from my window, that Sophia was engaged in a very long and animated conversation with my father, as they walked together in the pleasure-grounds before the house. Lord Arlingford's manner seemed more serious than it usually was in the company of his niece; and, as far as I could discern from Sophia's countenance and bearing, the subject must have been one of deep and painful interest to her. During the rest of the morning, she appeared to avoid me, and she more than once retired to her solitary room. Late in the afternoon, however, we were accidentally brought together. I seized her hand, and as our eyes met in one look of intense and mutual sympathy: "Sophia," said I, "you look pale and sad. Will you come for an hour on the lake?"

"With pleasure," replied she, and we moved on together, each walking in silent and gloomy abstraction. When we had been for *some time seated in our swift-sailing bark, with nothing around us but the listless sky and the heedless water*, I could no further

resist entering upon the subject which evidently engrossed all our thoughts, and I said :

"You had this morning, Sophia, a long, and apparently very interesting conversation with Lord Arlingford?"

"Yes, Edward," answered she, with a faint smile, "nearly as long as was yours yesterday."

"My father's last injunction to me was to consider all that he had said as strictly private. Perhaps he addressed a similar request to you."

"No, Edward, he did not; nor, indeed, would I have promised absolute compliance upon that point. I am, therefore, quite free to say that you were the principal subject of our discourse."

"I feared as much, Sophia, and my father mentioned to you, doubtless, his opinion as to my stay here."

"He did."

"And you answered——"

"That I thought you were the best judge upon this matter."

"And what opinion would you recommend me to entertain? Shall I continue in my profession, or retire and try some other trade?"

"Retire from the navy, Edward! now—at your age? with your prospects? I should never forgive you were you to take such a fatal step!"

"Well, but if I am to follow up my profession, Sophia, then my father is not so wrong, and we must soon be again separated."

My cousin sighed deeply, but remained silent. "When last we parted, Sophia," continued I, "some few words fell from you which have ever remained engraven on my heart. Will you repeat them when the sad hour again returns?"

"Edward," answered she, as a deep blush spread over her pale cheek, "when we last parted we were both children, and spoke as such. Our words are more serious now, and should not be lightly said."

"I, Sophia, can now repeat, in deep and solemn earnest, all that I then uttered in childish ignorance. I fear that is no longer so with you."

Sophia paused for a minute, and then resumed :

"What I feel for you, Edward, I have shown, I think, and that not long since, in a manner that might render words needless. But if we are too old now to talk lightly of these matters, we are too young yet to speak of them seriously. Let us mutually trust to our feelings, and abide by them. Neither you nor I can go further at present, without giving much pain to others, and perhaps preparing much misery for ourselves."

"I see then, Sophia, that my father has mentioned to you other matters than my professional duties."

"He has," said my cousin, as the blush again mantled her cheek. "he has alluded to a subject which is, and must remain for some time yet far from my thoughts. God knows I shall ever be but too willing to sacrifice myself either to my feelings or to my duty. But situated as I am, as I most unfortunately am, I cannot

but see that more than my own happiness depends upon the choice I must some day make. I have shown you already, Edward, far more I fear than was becoming, what is my more than sister's affection for you. What are my love, my gratitude, my deference for your father, I trust my conduct will also ever manifest, or I should be ungrateful indeed. We have both, Edward, a dread ordeal to go through, in which we shall need far more experience than either can possess at present. To precipitate nothing is all that I have promised your father; but what I have promised I will faithfully perform. You seem saddened at what I say Edward, yet is it not true, is it not unanswerable?"

"It is far too judicious, Sophia, for such love as mine either to utter or to comprehend."

"Then mistrust your love and trust to mine, Edward. Nay, but you need not throw aside my hand so roughly. My own Edward, what would you have me say?"

"Merely what you have already said, when your heart had not as yet learnt to reason so accurately. You weep, Sophia?"

"And why should not I? I could bear all, saving such injustice from you. Alas, Edward! could we have foreseen this day, how gladly would not we have called upon those dark waters, from which you rescued me, to close over our heads, and enshroud evermore our unsullied union!"

"Yes, for ever, my noble Sophia," exclaimed I, falling at her feet, "for ever united, but not in death. Life is open before us, and you are now a free agent. Say that you are mine, as but now you called me yours, and this arm, which here—even here, has torn you from the grasp of Azrael, will defend you through life against the whole world."

"Alas! if you are speaking seriously now," answered my cousin, "to what do your wishes tend? Do you think that I, Edward, with my education and my station, would consent clandestinely to pledge my faith, and to escape from this abode of unfailing kindness, as a school-girl from her boarding-house? No, Edward, the daughters of England are not thus won, when they respect themselves and wish to be respected by others."

"I see well how it is, Sophia, and if you can say no more than that, while I am seated at your side, I can well comprehend what I have to expect when thousands of miles will be again between us."

"Edward!" replied she, fixing her dark eyes upon me, "when all affirmed that we were parted, not by distance, but by the grave, there was one here by whom you were not forgotten, and she deserves more confidence and kindness than you have shown her to-day. I will grant all that I can, in honour and fairness, and what I promise to you I will proclaim to all—my faithful and unfailing affection for you, present or absent, until the day comes when the die of my life must be cast."

"And then——"

"And then, Edward, he to whom alone I have once said what I said to you, should he be still of the same mind, should he again be by my side, in manly honour and renown——"

"He, Sophia!" said I, grasping her trembling hand as my ardent gaze endeavoured to meet her averted eye.

"He; should he still be my constant, my noble, my faithful Edward, will have a claim to this poor hand greater than that which any wealth or any rank could afford. Believe me, Edward, neither you nor I, at our present age, could reasonably give or receive any further pledge than this, even had nothing as yet occurred between your father and me."

"My pledge, Sophia, is long since given. My whole heart for my whole life! Oh, that you could say as much."

My arm was around her slender waist, my hand pressed hers as it trembled convulsively in my grasp, our eyes met in deep communion, and her lips parted as if to give utterance to the long-sued word of hope, when a loud crash over our heads startled us from our trance, and Sophia fell on her knees in speechless terror.

"It is nothing, my angel," said I; "our mast must have been strained in the race the other day, and has given way."

"It is a warning," cried my cousin; "a warning from Heaven that we must go no further. God grant that I have not already said too much. Now take the oars, and let us return to the shore, I beseech, I command you."

CHAPTER XXV.

This might be the pate of a politician, * * * * One that would circumvent God, might it not?—HAMLET.

FROM that sad hour, there was an end to the free, confiding, and unconstrained intercourse which had as yet subsisted between my cousin and me. She appeared to dread me, she avoided being alone in my society, and she seemed ever apprehensive that I should again press her to overstep the self-imposed limits of what she conceived to be her duty to herself, and her engagements to my father. There was a tenderness in her voice and in her look which told me that the manner alone, and not the heart, was altered; but we conversed no more upon the subject which mutually engrossed all our thoughts.

One morning, before the autumn was very far advanced, several letters were delivered to my father while at breakfast. One of these he handed to me, after having glanced over it himself, and while attentively perusing another which seemed to be of deeper interest to him. The letter he thus presented to me was written in a very singular hand, and it was some time before I could completely ascertain that it was to the following effect:—

"My dear lord,—It has given me very great pleasure to hear that my gallant young friend, who was so close to my side on board the San Joseph, and afterwards at Santa Cruz, has been restored to you in good health. If he still is as zealous to serve his country as *he promised to be* when we last met, I should be very happy indeed

to take him with me when I again go to sea. Pray let me know if this would suit your views and his.

"I hear some mention of an expedition to the northern seas, where our friends the Danes appear to want to be looked after a little; and there is a probability of my going in that direction, on board the *St. George*, which is now fitting out at Portsmouth. I shall keep a berth for your son, until further advice from you.

"Believe me, my dear lord, with every feeling of respect, your faithful servant,

"NELSON AND BRONTE."

I was too much flattered at the terms in which I was mentioned by the man in the world I most admired, and I was, indeed, as yet too inexperienced well to consider whether this offer was likely or not to have been entirely spontaneous on the part of the heroic admiral. I therefore handed, in silence, the letter to Sophia; she merely observed that I must be much gratified by such a testimonial; and our eyes alone expressed the sad forebodings of our hearts. My father said nothing to me until breakfast was over, but on retiring from the room he whispered to me:—

"You will let me know to-morrow, Edward, what answer I am to make Lord Nelson."

I merely bowed assent, and Sophia and I remained alone.

"I suppose I must go," said I to her, after a few minutes' silence.

"Don't ask me, Edward;" and she burst into tears.

"My dear, my own Sophia," exclaimed I; "would that you were to say that you wished me never to leave you."

"Not yet—not yet," murmured she; and pressing her handkerchief to her eyes, she rushed out of the room.

During the rest of that day nothing further occurred between us; but on the following morning I heard a gentle knock at my door before I had completely finished dressing.

"As soon as you are ready, Edward," said a well-known voice, "follow me to the flower-garden; I have something to say to you."

When I reached the appointed spot, Sophia was already there.

"I wished to tell you, Edward," said she, "that I last night had another conversation with your father. I should not feel justified in mentioning all the details. The result, however, is that I have promised, both for you and for me, that we shall remain separated for two years at least, during which time you will write to me once every three months, and I shall answer each second letter. At the end of that period we shall meet again, and then, whatever we decide during the ensuing year, will encounter no farther opposition from any member of the family. I repeat that I have made the engagement both for you and for myself, and I am sure you will not additionally distress my feelings by offering any objections to *what I have conceived to be the best arrangement for both.*"

There was something so earnest in my cousin's tone and manner, that I could not resist giving the required assent, still reminding

her, however, that the whole responsibility of this agreement must rest with her.

Immediately after breakfast my father called me into his study, and inquired if I had given due consideration to the letter he had shown me the day before. I answered that I was perfectly ready to accept Lord Nelson's offer.

"Then I will write forthwith," said my father; "and now, Edward," continued he, fixing his penetrating glance steadfastly upon me, "allow me to ask if Sophia Waldegrave has mentioned to you what was agreed between her and myself yesterday?"

"She has, my dear father."

"And obtained your assent, as she promised me she would?"

"I have given it, as I saw no other honourable alternative. I wish, however, to state distinctly, that when, after an absence of more than two years, I shall return here, if it pleases God again to restore me to my home, I shall consider the sacrifices required from me and from others as having been completed. We shall then have recovered our natural and unalienable right of deciding for ourselves upon what principally interests us, and I trust that this right will no longer be contested or limited."

"Just so," replied my father.

"I will add that, if I can judge of my cousin's feelings by my own, it will not be impossible, by some arrangements, to conciliate the future prospects of Elmswater, which I have very much at heart, with our own happiness."

"Oh! that's quite out of the question," said my father, rather sternly; "such sacrifices are talked of, and, indeed, may be very sincerely contemplated at your age, but they never can be accomplished, nor, indeed, could I for a moment countenance them. However, I must rest satisfied with what you both promise, as I can obtain no more from either. And now, as to your allowance, I wish it to be liberal, and such as to enable you, during your absence, to procure for yourself every creditable amusement and pleasure which opportunity may offer. Your mother's fortune, which was fifteen thousand pounds, was settled upon you, and you shall have the whole interest of that sum placed regularly to your credit, wherever you may direct. I reckon, of course, my dear boy," said my father, in conclusion, "that neither in speech nor in writing, anything will occur between you and Sophia which should not entirely agree with the spirit of our understanding, fairly and honourably interpreted."

My word was passed with my father to this effect; we shook hands, and I left him.

About a fortnight after this conversation I received from the Admiralty an official communication, informing me that I had been appointed to the *St. George*, at Lord Nelson's particular request, and desiring me to proceed, as soon as possible, to Portsmouth, where that vessel was fitting out for sea with all expedition.

After a short consultation with Sophia and my father, I determined to remain but one week more at Elmswater, and then to

proceed to London, where it would be necessary for me to make some arrangements previously to my departure from England. During this short and sad interval, my cousin and I were continually together; but we most faithfully kept our promise to Lord Arlingford, and made no allusion whatever to our future hopes and destiny. It was melancholy to see how the silent grief of Sophia was inscribed on every feature of her lovely face, and how the bloom fled more and more from her cheek as the fatal day approached. I was myself so altered in appearance during the last month, that I literally was not recognised by some persons of the neighbourhood who had seen and conversed with me in the course of the late festivities at the castle.

During the last evening that we were to pass together, my cousin's sorrow and my own were more silent and abstracted than before. Every one felt for us, every one pitied us; and Lady Sheerness herself made this time no observation as we sat together on a distant couch, whilst a slight pressure of the hand alone attempted to convey what no words could have expressed.

When her usual hour for retiring to rest had struck, Sophia arose. She seized my hand, pressed hastily her lips to mine, and gently murmuring, "My own Edward, do not forget me," glided swiftly out of the room.

Scarcely had the door closed upon her, when I heard a sound which thrilled to my very heart.

"For Heaven's sake, Edward, don't go," exclaimed my father, as he rushed out of the room.

A moment afterwards a servant entered, and I could overhear him whisper to Lady Sheerness that his lordship required her immediate assistance, as Miss Waldegrave had fainted.

My aunt at once left the room, followed by Elmswater, and I remained alone, prostrate upon the couch which Sophia had just left. I was aroused soon after by the voice of my brother, who, laying his hand upon my shoulder with more affection than he had ever shown me before, said—

"She is better now; she sends her last love, and thinks it more advisable for both not to see you again!"

CHAPTER XXV.

Oh, that I were as in the years that are past, as in the days when God preserved me.—JOB.

EARLY on the following morning, I once more left the home of my fathers. The rain fell fast, and the dreary November gales were mournfully sweeping through the leafless woods, as I cast my last farewell glance at the spot which my heart could never forsake again. I did not feel the childish and helpless despondency which, *twice before*, in similar circumstances, had completely overpowered me; but, if approaching manhood lent me its strength to contend with my grief, it imparted also a far truer and deeper consolation.

ness of the misery which oppressed me. The fast-fleeting hours, the frequent changes of scene, and the inspiring progress of the rapid mail, brought now no alleviation to my distress, no respite from the forebodings which tortured and distracted my thoughts. I reached London—I accomplished there the necessary arrangements—I left it—I proceeded to Portsmouth, still in the same agonized frame of mind, still haunted by the fiend who was ever whispering in my ear that I had this time irretrievably cast away the only chance of happiness which life could offer!

As, seated by the coachman, after a cold and weary night, on the box of the mail, I approached Gosport, my stalwart companion, pointing in the direction of Spithead, said:—

"There's a noble vessel as is just going out to sea."

"She is indeed," answered I. "I suppose you have no idea what ship she is?"

"Not the slightest; there is such a moving about of them now."

When I left the coach I proceeded at once to the residence of the Port Admiral, who was, as I knew, slightly acquainted with my father. Soon after I had sent in my card, I was ushered into a sitting-room, which, as if still on his own quarter-deck, the bluff old seaman was pacing, in company with a middle-aged officer. He stopped, shook hands with me very good-naturedly, and said:—

"We are very much in want of midshipmen indeed here; let me see—what's your ship?—I forget now."

"The St. George, sir."

"The St. George. Why, she put to sea this morning!"

"Indeed, sir! I am sorry to hear it. How can I join her?"

"You must be a very good swimmer to do that. She is to cruise about in the Channel for a month or two, and God knows where she is by this time."

"But I thought, sir, the admiral was on board her?"

"The admiral? what admiral?"

"Lord Nelson, sir."

"Nelson! why, Lord bless you, he is not thinking of leaving England yet. You won't see him afloat until there is some business to be done, and that is what the gentlemen of the Foreign Office cannot make up their minds to decide upon."

"Then what am I to do, sir?"

"To do? Why, to dine with me to-day—then go to the play—straight home, mind that, afterwards, and to-morrow morning go on board the Undaunted, with my friend here, Captain Johnson. He is very much in want of a midshipman, and he will take great care of you."

"What do you say to that, young man?" said the person just mentioned, whose appearance was remarkably gentlemanlike and prepossessing.

"I should be very happy indeed, sir, to go to sea with you; but it was by Lord Nelson's particular desire that I was to join the St. George."

"That appears to be out of the question now," said Captain Johnson: "but if you will come with me as far as the coast of

Brittany, where I am bound with despatches, there is every prospect of our returning here before the St. George puts in again."

"And how shall I explain the matter to Lord Nelson, sir?"

"You had better let the admiral do that; it is he who commands here, and he will settle the matter to your satisfaction."

"Thus was I embarked on board the Undaunted, and with her I again repaired to the coast of Brittany. She was an old frigate, much sea-worn, poorly officered, and very badly manned. Nothing could be more unfavourable than the season, and the duties I had to perform were arduous in the extreme. No sooner had we joined the admiral in command off the French coast, than we were informed that our services were required for some time longer, and month after month we were detained, beating off that rugged and inhospitable shore, and exposed to the utmost hardships of a sailor's life.

Though my early and enthusiastic zeal for my profession was now much abated, I discharged my duties with a regularity and an unremitting application which completely won me the approbation of my captain and the regard of my shipmates. So necessary was it still for me to fly from my thoughts, from my recollections of the past as from my unceasing apprehensions with regard to the future, that I found a singular relief, and even repose, in every extremity of physical fatigue and toil; and as I far surpassed all my brother officers of the Undaunted both in my powers of persevering endurance and in theoretic acquirements, I became in time, a particular favourite with the captain. His singularly reserved manners, and unostentatious devotion to all professional objects, were particularly in accordance with my own frame of mind; and though his commendations were very sparingly bestowed upon me when I was present, I have since learnt, that for my speedy and early promotion, I was as much indebted to his favourable reports, as to my father's interest.

It was upon reaching Portsmouth, early in the ensuing summer, that I learned my appointment as lieutenant to a heavy corvette, which was on the point of sailing to the Mediterranean; but the satisfaction imparted to me by this intelligence, hardly compensated for the grief I felt on being informed of the far greater opportunities for distinction which would have offered had I accompanied Lord Nelson in his expedition to the Northern Seas.

I had not failed, exactly on the appointed days, to write to Sophia, and when at Portsmouth, I received a letter from her, acknowledging mine, in terms of the warmest sisterly affection, but conveying no indication of any other sentiment. The tremulous eagerness with which I opened this longed-for token of her remembrance could scarcely be satisfied by expressions so guarded and restrained. I did not forget, however, that Sophia might think it expedient to be enabled to communicate, if required, all that she might write to me; and though not the more disposed on that account entirely to adopt the same restrictions, I could not *be seriously offended* with her for abiding by them. As it would *have been particularly irksome* for me to have continued long in

England, while debarred from returning to Elmswater, I was happy to put to sea in the *Arethusa*, a very few days after the Undaunted had been paid off.

It was not until we had reached Gibraltar, that I was informed of a circumstance, for which I was assuredly nowise responsible, but which was destined to exercise a very fatal influence over my future prospects.

My new commander, Captain M'Ross, had been particularly anxious to have one of his nephews appointed to his ship, and my nomination had been determined upon contrary to his express desire and repeated solicitations. Even had not this unfortunate cause of irritation and disagreement subsisted, I believe that no cordiality or good-will would ever have arisen between this man and me. His character seemed to combine every unamiable fault and defect attributed to his countrymen, without one of their redeeming qualities. As low in mind as in birth, keenly jealous of every social distinction, suspicious, tyrannical, and incapable of giving a thought to any other object than himself, he was hated and despised by the officers, and detested by the men. I perceived, from the first hour, how willingly he would have attributed my recent promotion and appointment merely to family interest; but his attempts to find me in fault, and to betray me into some testimony of professional ignorance or inexperience, were most unfortunate for himself. They merely produced some slight discussions between us, in which, whilst I most respectfully pointed out, to the complete satisfaction of the bystanders, my captain's own remarkable deficiency in some important nautical acquirements, I certainly in no ways overcame his latent aversion for me.

The annoyance which my necessary intercourse with this personage would have caused me, was, however, much alleviated by the satisfaction I experienced in finding on board the *Arethusa* my former shipmate, young Richards, now a warrant-officer of some standing. Through him I was kept continually informed of the wishes and the opinions of the ship's crew; and having both the means and the desire of endearing myself to them, I was soon successful in winning, to a remarkable extent, their confidence and affection. This was the more necessary for the discipline of the ship, that the hatred with which M'Ross contrived to inspire every one on board, would, without any constant attention and influence, have driven the men more than once to the very verge of mutiny.

When I had expressed, during my stay at Elmswater, the deep respect and sympathy which I have always felt for the modest, unostentatious, and disinterested courage and energy displayed so often by the common seamen in the discharge of their duties, I spoke of a feeling that I have always had near at heart; and if I have, to my sincere gratification, often been the object of their good-will, I owe it, I believe, to the real and unaffected interest I have ever taken in their comfort and welfare. Little did I then dream of the fatal misrepresentation to which my honest sentiments and endeavours might be exposed!

As soon as we reached the fleet cruising off the Italian coast, we found that the late events had irretrievably affected the interest of England and our allies in that quarter. Full well had the young artillery officer of Toulon justified the prophetic views of Roysaumont. With the glance of his own adopted Eagle, Bonaparte had discerned the faults of the advancing Austrians, and since the thunderbolt had fallen upon the imperial legions in the plains of Marengo, the fortunes of the great republic were again triumphant in Northern Italy. Still, it was not with entire free-will that all the provinces and minor states, which, after such rapid changes and fluctuations of their destinies, were again to be bound together as a dependency of France, submitted to the stern decree of victory. Many were the aspirations for the separate existence of former days, or for the more visionary combinations of collective independence, and not a few influential persons were compromised by their not very guarded negotiations with the agents of England and Austria, or with the vanguard of Suwarrow. To ascertain the extent to which these feelings still prevailed, notwithstanding the arrangements of the peace recently concluded at Luneville, and of course, in a certain measure, to encourage any similar tendencies, were then the principal duties and confidential instructions of our cruisers. And though little, of course, could be achieved against the magic power which then enthralled Italy, we were not the less bound to produce, in that quarter, whatever diversion could be created for the energies so successfully devoted elsewhere by the enemy to the gigantic conflict in which the two great countries were engaged.

It was thus that the admiral, having been informed that, in the small island of Pianosa, a disposition existed rather to claim the protection of England than to remain associated either with Elba or the mainland, our vessel was despatched for the purpose of inquiring to what extent such sentiments prevailed there.

No sooner was our flag seen in the roadstead, than several persons came on board, and as I was the only officer at all acquainted with foreign languages, I was summoned by the captain to assist at the conversation which ensued. We were informed that, fostered by several Italian refugees, a strong inclination did certainly exist to adhere to England; that all French troops having been long since withdrawn from Elba, no great apprehension was entertained of any annoyance from that quarter; but that so serious a step as an open declaration in our favour, could not well be proposed by our friends, except they themselves received some equally open support. Nothing was concluded in this first meeting; but, after some further parley, the captain conceived himself justified in accepting for England—subject to the approval of the admiral and of the authorities at home—the allegiance of the inhabitants, until the general peace, which was then universally expected. As an earnest of the good-will of Great Britain, an officer and some men were to be disembarked, so as to defend a small fortified point of the island; and within the shortest delay

possible, the sloop was to return with instructions to conclude some more definite arrangement.

For the service thus specified, I was especially claimed by the parties with whom, under the captain's orders, I had conducted the negotiations; and as no unwillingness existed on the side of Mr. M'Ross to dispense with my presence on board, I was accordingly landed, with about forty men, among whom I had the great satisfaction of finding that my faithful Richards was included, partly, I believe, from the same motive as myself.

The point that we were to occupy had been originally nothing more than a large Martello tower; but latterly two out-houses had been constructed in its immediate neighbourhood, the whole being surrounded by a strong wall, built for purposes of defence, under the inspection of an engineer, and well provided with loop-holes. Though the greatest security prevailed among the inhabitants, in consequence of their notion that the garrison of Elba had been so reduced as to be unable to offer any opposition to their present schemes, I did not think it advisable to neglect all precautions. I ascertained that the six small pieces of artillery were perfectly fit for service; I considerably augmented our store of provisions and ammunition, so as to be able at any time to sustain a short siege, and I ordered two sentries to be continually on guard, one towards the sea, and the other on the side of the land. These dispositions having been concluded, and their punctual execution having been especially confided to Richards, I considered myself free to roam about the island in the day-time, with a view of becoming better acquainted with its inhabitants and different localities.

CHAPTER XXVII.

One of those forms that flit by us when we
Are young and fix our eyes on every face;
And oh! the loveliness at times we see
In momentary gliding.—BYRON.

As I was returning one day to my little fortress, after a long excursion on horseback, I was attracted by the appearance of a square house and gardens, situated at a short distance from the road. It appeared to be the residence of some wealthier peasant or farmer, was well provided with every rustic appurtenance, and surrounded by a profusion of fruit-trees. Being rather exhausted with my ride, I felt a strong inclination to appropriate to myself a few of the oranges which were strewed about on the ground in great numbers, and I dismounted with this intention. Scarcely, however, had I raised one of these to my lips, when I was startled by hearing a gentle voice behind me, telling me, in Italian, that I had made a bad selection, and that those on the trees were much better.

I attempted to explain that I considered I had already com-

mitted an unpardonable indiscretion. Upon this, my new acquaintance stepped herself upon the low wall by which she was standing, and, with great eagerness, proceeded to detach the best oranges that she could reach, insisting upon my accepting as many as I could carry away. Had I not been, by this act of unexpected courtesy, predisposed in favour of the graceful apparition, I should have been equally struck, I believe, by the charm of her countenance, and by the striking beauty of her truly Italian face.

"May I venture to ask the name of the person to whom I am so much indebted?"

"My name, sir, is Bianca Salvi, per servirla."

"Your father, I presume, resides here?"

"Si, signor."

"He is a farmer?"

"Yes, sir."

"And you are his only child?"

"No, sir; I have one younger brother."

"You live in an enchanted spot. You must be much attached to it."

"Oh, yes, sir; but I often go into the town, where I have many friends. I saw you land there, the first day."

"Indeed! And what did you think of the English sailors?"

"They appeared to me like tall children; I had never seen fair men before."

"I hope, then, you are fond of children?"

"Oh, yes, sir, very," answered the blushing Bianca.

"I suppose that, with your youth, beauty, and charming costume, you have many admirers?"

"No, sir; I believe not, at least."

"Well, farewell, my fair Bianca. I will, if you will allow, occasionally call upon you, to thank you again for your generous present."

"I shall be too proud," said she; and we parted.

As shyness is not a peculiarity of southern characters and climates, I was in this, as in many similar instances, on as familiar terms with my new acquaintance, after a few minutes' conversation, as I should have been with one of my own countrywomen after many interviews. Had it not been for the recollection of Sophia, I should have been a frequent visitor at Salvi's farm; but I felt so deep an interest for his fascinating daughter arising within me, that I vowed not to see her more than once in each week, and I faithfully kept this internal pledge. Great was Bianca's joy when she heard the distant sound of my horse's hoofs clattering along the road, and ere I could reach the spot where our acquaintance had begun, I was always joined by her, dressed in all the picturesque beauty of her native attire, and ready to enter, with a most winning simplicity, into every detail of her life, feelings, and prospects. Fortunate climes, where the mind is as sunny as the sky, and where nature's children revel through life in the careless enjoyment of all her priceless gifts!

When I had been for about six weeks in the island, as I was

walking one evening at a short distance from the fort, I was accosted by a messenger, who had come from the town at full speed, to require my immediate presence there. Mounting his horse, I obeyed the injunction with the utmost haste; and great indeed was the confusion which was prevailing among the authorities of our little realm when I joined them.

My first endeavour was to ascertain clearly the mere facts of the case, independently of all commentaries; and I found that the agitation was caused by important intelligence just received from Elba. According to these advices, Murat, who, since his complete victory over the troops of the Comte de Damas, was all-powerful in central Italy, had despatched a regiment to occupy this island; the French troops had been received there with great enthusiasm, and there was every reason to believe that their attention would soon be turned to our proceedings. So great was the revulsion which this news had produced in the feelings of our authorities, that nothing less was already contemplated than a respectful message to the French commanding officer, informing him that the island had been forcibly occupied by the British sailors, but that the inhabitants were not the less willing to follow the fortunes of Elba.

So soon as I had allowed my voluble associates to give a free utterance to all their fears and consequently modified intentions, I asked leave to present one single observation, which was to the following effect:—"The assistance of England had been freely and spontaneously claimed; her sailors and her flag had been landed on the island at the particular request of the inhabitants; any steps taken which would not be strictly in accordance with the line of policy thus adopted and carried out, would be considered by me, by every British officer in the Mediterranean, and undoubtedly by England herself, as nothing more nor less than a declaration of war." Many were the efforts made to induce me to alter this opinion, but I remained inflexible; and as the speedy arrival of a British cruiser was not less probable than a French expedition from Elba, I finally persuaded the majority of the council to abide at any price by their engagements with us, at least for the present.

The circumstances of the case requiring greater precautions than had as yet been taken by any one but myself, I succeeded besides in obtaining from the council a decree ordering a levy of all the male inhabitants between the ages of eighteen and sixty, for the purpose of defending the island against any sudden attack on the part of the new garrison at Elba. When this order had been duly promulgated I left the town, not without, however, throwing out a gentle suggestion, that I should consider it my duty carefully to observe and to report the conduct of every one of the leading inhabitants.

On the following day, while minutely inspecting with Richards all our means of defence, I was informed that a young country-girl wished to speak to me. I desired her to be introduced, and Bianca Salvi entered, in a state of great agitation.

"I am come," said she, "to claim your assistance and protection."

"Indeed, Bianca? Who can have ventured to molest or to annoy you?"

"Oh, it is not for me, sir; it is for my *innamorato*."

"Your *innamorato*, Bianca? You little story-teller; you told me that you had none."

"Why, I did not know that I had a right to claim him as such when you first inquired."

"Oh, very well, *mia carina*, I will spare your blushes. Now tell me what they have done to him?"

"Alas! they have taken him, and want to make a soldier of him, to fight the French who are coming."

"And I suppose you are delighted, and he too, at the prospect of his distinguishing himself in this war?"

"No, indeed, signor; I am in despair."

"You don't mean to say, I hope, Bianca, that you like a man the less for wearing an epaulette and a sword?"

"O, no, sir, on the contrary; but my poor Antonio is not a man like you! He is a peaceful carpenter of the town, who will be sure to run away if the enemy come; and, indeed, he will be no loss to the army if you can obtain an exemption for him."

"And is it to such a man, my lovely Bianca, that you have given this small hand, and the true and generous heart that your dark eyes reveal?"

She glanced at me with one look of the most artless and charming simplicity, and said, "The hand I have promised to give to please my father; it is not my fault, I hope, if the heart does not go with it."

"And yet you plead earnestly for this man whom you cannot love?"

"Oh, poor Antonio! I have known him all my life; he is wretched, and I should be so happy if he were passed over."

"Your wish is sufficient, my dear; give me his name in full, and as I am going into the town I will obtain his release."

I did not neglect, on that day and on the following, scrutinizing, to the utmost of my ability, the conduct and behaviour of all the members of the government council. They were unanimous now in their professions of devotion to England, and of assent to all my views. These assurances, however, could not quite efface from my recollection the scene I had witnessed a few days before. I was thus not very much surprised, one morning, when an express arrived from the town, informing me of the events which had just taken place there.

At daybreak three small vessels had been seen in the offing, laden with French soldiers. These had immediately landed, apparently under the guidance of some person well acquainted with the locality; and before any serious attempt at resistance could be made they had taken possession of our little town, and there unfurled the "*tricolore*." I was also informed that a small body of our more decided adherents, unwilling to acknowledge the new state of things, were proceeding in all haste to me with two pieces of cannon and some arms, ammunition, and provisions which they

had secured. These persons arrived soon afterwards, having certainly accomplished their eight miles' march with remarkable speed, and my garrison was thus reinforced by about fifteen men, all, as they assured me, willing to shed the last drop of their blood in their adopted cause.

We spent the remainder of the morning in laying in every species of fresh provision which the neighbourhood could afford; and, late in the afternoon, as I had expected, a French officer appeared bearing a flag of truce. He was accompanied by two members of the government, who had not been, as I believe, perfect strangers to any of the circumstances of his arrival, though, but the day before, my apparently most devoted adherents. After a short communication with Richards, I proceeded beyond the precincts of my entrenchments to meet the new comers. I coldly bowed the two Italians aside, and entered immediately into unreserved conversation with the French officer.

"You are aware," said he, "that we are masters of the island. I come, in accordance with the government council, represented by these gentlemen, to request that you will name the terms upon which you are willing to treat."

"I will tell you fairly," answered I, "that I have not the means of attacking you in the town, until I have received the succours which I am hourly expecting; but I have long since made all the requisite preparations for sustaining here, either an assault or a siege, and I trust you will not needlessly risk the lives of your brave soldiers in making the attempt."

"So you intend to hold out?"

"Most decidedly."

"Very well," said the officer, who was a young man of pleasing demeanour and very intelligent look; "I fear that your wall, though it certainly appears well manned, will not stand long against our artillery."

"We must do our best," replied I. "Duty, you know, is our motto, as honour is yours."

"So you decidedly refuse all terms of capitulation, however favourable?"

"I do."

The Italians would have added some observations, but I positively declined to listen to them, and they were retiring with the French officer when I observed that the attention of the latter was attracted by some signals, which Richards was hoisting and shifting on a long flag-staff we had erected at the summit of the tower.

"It is no new treachery," said I to the officer, "as you would certainly be justified in suspecting here. My signals are with the sea."

Ere he was out of sight, the report of one of our carronades came in confirmation of our little *ruse de guerre*, which I have every reason to believe was for the time successful.

Fully aware of the rapidity with which the soldiers of Murat conducted their operations, I made all preparations for an imme-

diate attack, so that no one among us was surprised when, at day-break next morning, the fort was invested.

It soon became clear that the object of the enemy was to make a breach in our wall; and as I had no means in my power to prevent this, I ordered all our ammunition to be reserved, and all dispositions to be made, so as to give the storming-party a warm reception so soon as they appeared. Our cannon were loaded to the muzzle with grape; each man had a second musket and a large amount of cartridges placed at his side; and my positive orders were, that the fire should be held back until the assailants were within half-pistol shot.

By about eleven o'clock a considerable portion of our wall having been thrown down, a large body of troops advanced to storm the breach. Nothing could exceed the coolness and precision with which all my arrangements were carried out. The enemy approached, entirely unmolested, until within about thirty yards of the wall, when so deadly a fire from our musketry and artillery was opened upon him, that his first ranks were positively mowed down. Nothing daunted, he moved on nearer and nearer; but at every shot each foremost man was continually struck, while the grape and canister would tell fearfully at rapid intervals upon the whole mass.

Dispirited and exhausted, the assailants reached the breach, but it was bristling with pikes and bayonets, while every species of projectile fell upon their devoted heads. Human fortitude could not endure a prolonged exposure to such perils. Our brave antagonists saw that, for this time, the day was against them, and were at length constrained to retire, still suffering severe loss from the unceasing discharges of our artillery.

Towards evening the weather became most inclement, the rain fell in torrents, and I was soon enabled to communicate to my gallant band the grateful intelligence that the foe had retired to the town, having obtained an hour's truce to carry away their dead, which lay strewed in great numbers on the glacis of our little fortress.

This important success did not induce me to relax any of my precautions. For several days, however, we were unmolested, and I remained without any intelligence of the enemy's plans, until, late one evening, as I was walking in the immediate neighbourhood of our entrenchment, I was, to my utmost surprise, accosted by Bianca Salvi, suddenly emerging from the thicket which enclosed the road.

"I am so happy to see you again, signor," exclaimed she. "I have long been most anxious to come to you, but you are aware that the strictest orders have been given not to communicate with you."

"I had imagined as much, carina. Now tell me why you have exposed yourself to the awful penalty doubtless decreed against all who should disregard these commands. I should almost be tempted to scold you, were I not so delighted again to see your lovely face. As you are here, however, will you not walk in and rest yourself?"

"Not yet, though I am much tired, as I have run nearly half the way from the town to impart at once what I conceived it might much interest you to hear. You are to be attacked to-night, and if this attack fails, then to-morrow you are to be regularly—*oh, Jesu Maria, ho dimenticato!*—what was the word Antonio said?"

"Besieged?" said I, in Italian.

"Exactly, sir, besieged."

"And you had the news from Antonio?"

"How do you know that?" said Bianca, anxiously.

"Why, you said as much just now, *carina mia*; but I suppose that you did not remark it, for of course you think of nothing but him."

Bianca raised her eyebrows with an expression which was certainly not of assent, and then said—

"Poor Antonio, he was afraid to come himself; but while working at the house of one of the authorities, he heard the whole plan discussed, and so soon as he reported it to me, I determined that you should know it at any price."

"Thank you a thousand times, my noble-hearted Bianca. Now tell me, how are your love-matters progressing?"

"Oh, we must not talk of that now, but of the attack. I wonder that my news produces so little impression upon you."

"It is most valuable, my dear Bianca; but now that it is imparted, I can dismiss the subject from my thoughts, as we are always ready for an assault at a moment's notice. I ought, however, to inquire at what hour you think they will come?"

"They are to leave the town at midnight."

"At midnight; then we must be quite ready for them by two o'clock. There will be some business done to-night while you are fast asleep, my pretty Bianca."

"I shall not be asleep," answered my companion, earnestly. "I shall be praying the Holy Virgin for your safety and success."

"How shall I thank you, my fair intercessor? Would that I knew your noble language better." My arm was around her slender waist; our eyes required no tuition to convey our thoughts; they met first, and then our lips.

"Come in now, *anima mia*," said I, "and rest yourself, for you must be worn out with so long and rapid a walk." She entered with me the small room which I occupied, conjointly with Richards. But the image of Sophia was not absent from my thoughts at that hour, and I desired the faithful boatswain not to retire.

Scarcely had I persuaded Bianca to take a little refreshment, when she sprang up, and exclaiming, "Oh, what a memory I have when I am with you," she drew from her bosom a small slip of paper, on which were written merely four numbers:—800—100—4—300.

"What on earth are these?" said I.

"Let me see, signor, I must make no mistakes. Eight hundred is the number of the French troops when they landed; a hundred

is their loss in killed and wounded the other day; four is the number of ladders they have obtained, I forgot what for—”

“For scaling the wall, I suppose, Bianca.”

“Exactly, signor. And the three hundred means that they will have tents for three hundred men.”

During some time we conversed together, and when at last Bianca rose to retire, I made no effort to detain her.

“Could you remain here in perfect safety,” said I, “I should certainly keep you as my prisoner, rather than let you go roaming about the island at this hour. As it is, however, you had no doubt better return towards home before the night gets darker, and before the troops are on their march. I should myself accompany you, were there not less danger for you to be alone than with me.”

“They won’t shoot a woman,” answered Bianca, laughing. “On the contrary, they are extremely polite, I assure you. I am only afraid of what my father will say when he sees me coming home so late.”

Having communicated to Richards, and to my principal Italian associates, Bianca’s intelligence, I made sure that every disposition for repelling the attack was taken, and I retired to rest until one o’clock in the morning. By that time all our little garrison was on foot, awaiting with the greatest possible confidence the new onset.

About the appointed hour our sentinels reported that a body of men was rapidly advancing from the town. As on the former occasion, no notice was taken of them by us until they were close at hand; then two bluelights were sent up, and the deadly fire of our musketry and guns was opened, with the same fatal precision as in the broad daylight.

By the confusion which immediately ensued in the enemy’s ranks, I judged that their commanding officer must have been wounded; and the disorderly retreat which followed confirmed this impression. Again we had availed ourselves to the utmost of all the advantages of our position, but I full well knew the spirit of the troops with whom I had to contend, and I could not but anticipate that our severest trials were yet to come.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Arm, arm, it is the cannon’s opening roar.—BYRON.

EARLY next morning, immediately without the range of our guns, the tents mentioned by Bianca were raised; and intrenchments having been thrown up for their artillery, which happily was but of small calibre, every arrangement was made by the French troops for a regular siege. The utmost vigilance was now required on our side, for at all hours of the day and night, parties of the enemy were moving about inspecting our weak points, or

ascertaining to what extent we had been able to repair the damages we were continually sustaining from their fire.

One day, as I was superintending myself some of these works, a cannon-ball struck the tower close behind me, and rebounded with great force upon me, detaching at the same time a considerable portion of stone. I was violently hurled to the ground; and when I was raised, it was ascertained that, besides many contusions in my body, my left arm was broken. I was conveyed into the tower in a state approaching to insensibility; but a little wine soon restored me, and thanks to the kind attentions of my faithful Richards, and of one of the refugees, who had had some slight practice as a surgeon, my arm was set, and I was able that very evening to return to my duties. The pain, however, I felt during the following days was very great: my fever ran high, and my thirst was incessant. Happily the fort being provided with a good well, I and my brave followers lacked neither for water, nor, thanks to Richards's provident care, for spirits to mix with it; but in other respects our provisions began to run very low.

As day by day we were anxiously looking towards the sea, to behold the approach of the long-expected succour, our fresh meat failed, then our salt provisions, and at length our much-diminished rations included nothing but biscuit, grog, and coffee. In the meantime, and as if aware more and more of our altered circumstances, the enemy pressed harder and harder upon us.

After several reconnaissances, in which they failed in effecting a surprise, they made one night a grand attack with such impetuosity, that they finally carried by storm both our exterior wall and our outhouses. As, however, I had foreseen the probability of this emergency, I had provided beforehand for it, and I was enabled to withdraw my men into the tower, from which in complete security we poured upon the assailants such a fire of musketry, as to oblige them to retire, after having irretrievably injured all our outworks.

To atone for this disaster, Richards and I, with a few picked men, sallied out on the following night. We succeeded in surprising and disarming the two sentries at the battery, and in spiking four guns out of the six. But the alarm having been given, the enemy attacked us in such numbers, that we were obliged to retire, and we were happy, thanks to the darkness of the night, to reach our stronghold, with the loss of two men only.

Still from the side of the sea no succour or hope came. Several of our men had now been killed or wounded; our Italian and insular associates were sorely discouraged, and even the stern resolution of my brave seamen began to fail them. In the actual hour of conflict, I found them decidedly superior to their auxiliaries; but I am bound to admit that their general habits being less temperate, they showed less good humour and forbearance, under the increasing privations to which we were subjected.

"How many days more will our provisions last?" said I, one evening to Richards, as we were searching together in the

of our outworks for some fragments of timber, which were required in the tower.

"If we diminish the rations again, my lord, I think we can hold out for another week."

"Those Italian fellows certainly bear up very well."

"Why they do, my lord: that little store of garlic they brought with them, has helped them out wonderful. They likes it better than they likes the French bagonets."

"Well, so should I too perhaps, Richards, if I fancied it."

"I don't know, sir; it must be a good dish that you likes better than leading on your men to action, and that ever since the days of the San Joseph. I shall never forget the commodore's smile when he saw you close behind him there!"

"Ay, that was a great day, Richards. Well, do you know what I was thinking of just now? Either our enemy over there must have lost their best officer, as I rather believe they did during that second onset, or else the grand campaigns in which they have been engaged, have taught them rather to overlook the mode of conducting this sort of little warfare. If forty of their men were inside here, and you, Richards, were in command of three hundred, or say one hundred English seamen, or even soldiers, how long would you be, should you say, before you got the tricolour down from that flag-staff there?"

"Do you mean, my lord, with the outworks lost, or with them still in possession of the garrison?"

"I see that you understand me well Richards by that question. I speak as if matters were as they now stand, with the outworks lost."

"Then, sir, I should say, with your leave, the fort would just hold out about long enough for me to surround it with wood, sufficient to smoke the parties inside out of it, very much as you would the foxes about Elmswater Castle."

"That's exactly what I have been thinking ever since they have stormed that outside wall; and though we cannot now defend those works without much loss, I question whether we should not occupy them again, to prevent the enemy from making some attempt such as we were speaking of. What do you say, Richards!"

"Why, my lord, I don't know what to say," answered my faithful comrade, scratching his head in great perplexity. "As they may not think of it themselves, knowing, which they do, no doubt, that our provisions is running short, and as indeed, there is not much wood in the neighbourhood, we may, perhaps, as well leave matters as they are until something new occurs."

A moment's silence ensued, which was broken by a short exclamation of surprise from my companion. He raised the rifle he always carried, and my eyes following him through the dark night shade, in the direction towards which he was glancing with the intense eagerness of a falcon, I fancied I discerned as he did, something stealthily moving without in our direction.

"*Stay, Richards,*" whispered I, "we had better retire to the tower first and fire from there."

"I think, with your leave, sir, I must make an example of this fellow, as they have been skulking about here for the last two nights, always in search of some mischief."

Again some bright colour seemed to gleam through the darkness. Richards took a long aim and fired.

A low shriek was immediately heard, followed by the exclamation, "Femina!"

This short and touching appeal would have been sufficient, but I also recognised the gentle voice. I rushed forward in the direction of the fatal shot, and soon poor Bianca was in my arms.

"Are you hurt, my dear, my noble girl?" whispered I.

"Oh, no! signor, the ball just touched my arm, and I am still able to carry what I have brought for you. They said that you were starving, and I am come with all that I had strength to bear."

"My brave and faithful Bianca," exclaimed I, relieving her of one of her massive baskets, "you cannot surely have borne this for any distance?"

"I carried the smallest from my father's house, and Antonio brought the other for me as far as the camp."

"And not much beyond the outposts, I should think, from what you have already told me? Now come into the tower, and let me again scold you for this unpardonable imprudence; I shall love you no more if you disobey me thus."

We entered the tower, and as Richards was, with considerable satisfaction, examining the contents of the paniers, which were well stocked with the choicest provisions that the farm could afford, Bianca's anxious gaze was rivetted upon me.

"How altered you are, Signor Edouardo," said she, "since last we met! And why is your left arm thus bound up?"

"It has been broken, *carina mia*."

"Broken!" exclaimed she, and she burst into tears. "But why," resumed she, with much eagerness, "why will you hold out here, when all could be so easily settled without bloodshed?"

"Because, Bianca, there is a little square yard of canvas over our heads, which we are all bound to defend with our hearts' blood. Thus have successive generations upheld its honour, until now, in its turn, it reflects and sheds its own lustre and glory even upon its humblest defenders."

"*Ah, che pazzia!*" replied she. "And then, who has attended to your wounds? who has bound up your arm?"

"This is my nurse, Bianca. Is he not," continued I, in Italian, that my faithful Richards might not understand me, "is he not a gentle and delicate attendant for such a purpose?"

"Oh, I suppose he would be a good nurse enough for a bear; but for you, with that hand of his which is as wide as my bodice—"

"Yes, and larger too, Bianca."

"Well, come, let me see that wound, and I will dress it with my handkerchief, as your own sister would."

She proceeded at once to examine and to replace my rude bandages, and with such tenderness, care, and skill, that I believe I ma-

attribute to her my ultimate and entire recovery of the use of that arm.

When this operation had been concluded, "I must not forget," said Bianca, "that I have some military intelligence for you. Perhaps you don't know that the French soldiers have been collecting wood in great quantities from all parts of the island; and Antonio's belief is, that they will attempt to-morrow to set fire to the tower."

"Do you hear that, Richards?" said I, communicating to him the substance of what I had just been told. "It shows that our forebodings were well justified. Now, as we have plenty of ammunition, we must endeavour to prevent their approaching too near."

Bianca remained with us some time longer, still urging me not to protract any further our apparently hopeless resistance; but at last remembering that the hapless Antonio was expecting her in the neighbourhood of the camp, she bade me farewell. I determined this time, notwithstanding the earnest remonstrance of Richards, to see her in safety beyond the precincts of the fort, and I did not leave her until she was on the road, and within sight of the tree, by which her timid lover was expecting her.

Though I had avoided approaching too near the line of the enemy's sentries, I was enabled to ascertain, during this short excursion, that the whole camp was in motion; and on re-entering the tower, the report of several distant shots confirmed my impression as to the necessity of great vigilance on our part during that night. Within an hour of my return, the sounds of approaching footsteps were distinctly heard in every direction. Our blue-lights having all been unfortunately burned, I was unable clearly to discern the object of that evening's movements; but Richards and I both concurred in supposing that the French soldiers were bringing forward great quantities of wood, so as to envelope the tower in a close circle of flames. The extreme darkness of the night was so favourable to this enterprise, that it was accomplished without any serious molestation on our part.

CHAPTER XXIX.

The rose was yet upon her cheek
But mellowed with a tenderer streak;
Where was the play of her soft lips fled?—BYRON.

FOR about half-an-hour after daybreak, the French officers awaited the effect which the consciousness of our situation might produce upon us; but seeing no indication of any change in our resolution, they ordered the operation to be carried out. Forthwith, under the cover of large shields of massive wood, constructed with great art, for the purpose of protecting the men, several small parties advanced, and they succeeded in setting fire, on different points, to the huge circular pile. Had the day been a perfect calm, our situation would have been intolerable; but a fresh breeze

arising, carried away from us a great portion of the smoke and flames, and having detached our buckets from the well, we were enabled to quench the fire, in that quarter where it would have given us most annoyance.

The failure of this device having been ascertained, preparations were now made by the enemy to take our stronghold by escalade, and their whole force was soon seen advancing upon us for this purpose. Nothing daunted by the discharges of our musketry and our artillery, they reached the foot of the tower, and succeeded in planting three out of their four ladders; but these being rather too short, we could cut down, with great facility, each foremost man, as he was attempting to reach the summit of our building; and orders were soon given to carry the ladders away, no doubt for the purpose of making the requisite alterations.

By eleven o'clock that morning, all was ready for a new onset, and as we had now lost more than one of our bravest fellows, the same spirit no longer prevailed among our reduced and weary garrison. I had descended from the tower into the ruins of our outworks, with two of our best marksmen, for the purpose of doing some execution upon the leading column, and we had already fired a few shots with our rifles, when one of my companions exclaimed:—

“Why, the enemy is halting, and there is an officer coming forward alone; I will soon settle him.”

“Stop a moment,” said I, arresting his gun, there must be some mistake;” and looking up behind me, I saw, to my utter dismay, that a white flag had been hoisted upon our flag-staff, close under the colours of England.

I rushed into the tower, and was met by Richards, who, while directing the fire from one of the loop-holes, was as yet unaware of the occurrence.

“Come with me,” exclaimed I; “there is treason up there;” and when we reached the platform, we found that the flag-staff was in the sole possession of the Italians.

“Who has ventured to show that flag?” cried I.

“We have,” answered several voices; “we can hold out no longer.”

“Traitors,” rejoined I, “stand back; the first man who ventures to approach me, may bid farewell to life.” And, with my pistol in my hand, I ordered Richards to haul down the accursed emblem of submission.

“We will, at all events fight no more,” repeated the Italians, rather daunted by our decided bearing.

“That is as you please,” answered I; “but I command here, as long as I live, and will vindicate my authority at any price. Now, leave this platform immediately, every one of you.” My countrymen had by this time all rallied round me, and with fixed bayonets we compelled our faithless allies to descend into one of the rooms in the tower, where they were disarmed and secured.

I then proceeded to meet the French officer, who, on beholding the flag of truce, had come forward to parley. It was the same

that I had seen on the former occasion ; his arm, like mine, was in a sling, and we were both so altered by the fatigue and anxiety we had undergone since our last interview, that we were for a moment in mutual doubt as to our identity.

"I am in despair at the error that has occurred," said I. "I need not disguise from you, that there has been a serious misunderstanding here? I trust you will believe me, however, when I affirm that the flag which has just been removed, had been shown without my knowledge and sanction, and that it was hauled down, from the very moment I was aware it had been raised."

"I will believe, sir, anything that so gallant an officer says ; but I much wish that you would spare any further bloodshed by assenting to the views of those who hoisted it."

"That is out of the question as yet," replied I.

"Then you decline sending any message to my commanding officer?"

"I have none to trouble you with, saving the foregoing explanation, which I trust you will convey."

"I certainly shall," answered my courteous antagonist ; and he withdrew, not however, without reminding me, that the blood now shed must rest exclusively upon my head.

Hardly had I again reached the platform of the tower, when I was met by Richards, who exclaimed, in a tone of the greatest exultation :—

"Did you hear that sound, sir?"

"What sound, Richards? I heard nothing."

"You heard nothing, my lord ! then see this ;" and he led me to the side of our tower, which looked upon the sea. There, just ahead of the small promontory which enclosed our little bay, I beheld two noble vessels gliding into it with all sails set ; and oh, the unimaginable joy, the British ensign !

My first care was to answer their signal gun—my second to hoist the standard of England reversed, in sign of my utter distress. Aware now, that the long-promised succour was at hand, the assailants determined upon making one more desperate effort to wrest our little fortress from us before our countrymen could effect a landing ; but the British vessels, having well discerned the circumstances in which we were placed, opened at once a most destructive fire from their artillery, under the protection of which, every disposable boat, each heavily laden with armed men, proceeded with all rapidity to the shore. Again and again the scaling-ladders were fixed, but our spirits were now excited to madness by the approach of our countrymen ; the Italians themselves, when aware of the change in our prospects, had requested, as a favour, again to take their share in the defence ; and the assaults of the enemy were completely repulsed.

"This would be too rough work to last long, Richards, were it not for that blessed sight yonder," said I, in one of our brief intervals of repose.

"Ay, ay, sir ; but if there were but one man only here, he would hold out now. See how they are pulling for the shore, as if the

would split their oars. There is one noble officer already landed."

"Yes, Richards, and how he is cheering on his men, with his hat in his hand. Singular it is; we do not know him, and he does not know us, and yet how sure both may feel, that each will stand by the other so long as a breath of life endures."

The assailants being now aware that a large body of marines and seamen was moving on to attack their rear, collected their scattered forces to retire upon their camp; and though our reduced garrison scarcely numbered twenty able men, none of them could resist joining in the pursuit. Great was our joy when meeting our gallant deliverers, and greater still our exultation when we entered together the enemy's little encampment, which he found himself unable to hold against the furious onslaught of the freshly-landed troops and of their long-confined auxiliaries. There, however, our successes ended for that day. The French force was speedily collected, in the most martial array, about half a mile beyond the camp, and it became evidently unadvisable to molest them any further in their slow and orderly retreat upon the town.

After the first salutations and greetings between our countrymen, the commanding officer having expressed a wish to examine our little fortress, I repaired to it with him, avoiding the direct line of road, which was now strewn with the bodies of the dead and the wounded. Hardly had we proceeded a hundred yards, when, not far from us, I heard a low moaning sound, and on reaching the foot of a small olive-tree, which was close at hand, I beheld a sight, the horror of which has never been surpassed by any of those which it has been my sad fate to witness. Bianca Salvi was lying there—her gay costume, alas! sadly stained and besmeared with her own blood; her face, pale as death itself, and her dark eyes half-closed as if in the extremity of human suffering. When I knelt beside her, however, she recognised me, and answered, though in a very low voice, my wild exclamations of astonishment and despair.

The sad tale was soon told. On the night before, having missed Antonio at the appointed spot, she had approached the lines in quest of him, and thus had been fired at and wounded, doubtless by mistake, on that very spot, where she had remained ever since, unnoticed and unable to move.

Summoning in haste a few of our men, we constructed a rude stretcher, upon which, with the utmost care, we bore into the tower the ill-fated girl, and I then placed her on my own bed. It was now necessary to uncover her chest, to examine the deep wound which the reckless bullet had there inflicted.

"Not before all those men, Signor Edouardo," murmured she, faintly.

"Alas! my dear Bianca," replied I, "I fear that I have less experience of *these matters* than any of them."

"Never mind," said she, "let no one but you touch me; *th* can come in later."

To comply with her request, they retired. I then proceeded alone to remove the gay bodice, the dimensions of which

night before, she had playfully compared to the hand of Richards; but I had little knowledge of the mysterious details of a lady's toilet. Alas! what an apprenticeship.

"I should have thought that you knew more of these things by this time," said Bianca, smiling in the midst of all her sufferings, and she feebly directed and assisted my efforts.

The fair bosom was now uncovered; but who will arrest the purple life-stream, as it flows from that ghastly wound? I rushed in search of the Italian who had attended upon me, and a surgeon, who had landed from our ship, was soon with him at Bianca's side; but far less practised eyes could have discerned, that mortal skill was now unavailing. When the wound was dressed, however, the pain subsided.

"Let me be alone with you, Signor Edouardo—I am better now, and we shall be able to talk together. In the mean time, pray send for my father and for a priest," continued she, raising fervently to her lips a small gold cross she always wore round her neck. "So you have saved the little fort after all! If I could but think I had contributed to this victory, I should die happy."

I pressed her hands to my lips, and fast, fast fell my tears. The distracted Antonio now entered; he had been seized by the sentinels on the night before, and detained until the order for retreat upon the town had been given. He knelt in speechless agony by his affianced bride. "Poor Antonio," murmured she, "do not weep for me. I must tell you a secret now: I loved you as a brother, but nothing more; my heart was with him here, ever since I saw him land on our island, ever since his blue eyes were fixed upon me, that first day, by the low wall of our garden. Here, take my hand, Signor Edouardo; you will not have long to keep what it gives." She turned her head aside, and remained for some time silent and motionless, as Antonio and I were still kneeling by her.

"How do you find her now?" whispered I to the surgeon of the *Arethusa*, when, soon afterwards, he re-entered the room.

The Scotchman fixed his light grey eye upon me with a singular expression of surprise and of pity, and placing upon Bianca's bosom the small crucifix which had now fallen from her grasp, replied, "She is at rest for ever."

Thus ended the only day of triumph that I have ever known.

CHAPTER XXX.

Is this the promised end?—KING LEAR.

WHEN I returned on board the *Arethusa*, which was one of the vessels that had come to our relief, Captain M'Ross's sole welcome to me, was an inquiry whether the white flag was not flying upon the tower as the ships first entered the bay. I explained to him briefly the circumstances under which the untoward incident had occurred, but I saw by his incredulous and vindictive smile, that

he was determined to make use of this fact in such a manner as to deprive me of any little credit which might be due to me or to our protracted defence. I have since ascertained that this suspicion, on my part, was but too well founded.

On the very day of their arrival off Pianosa, our two ships approached the town, and the terror of the inhabitants rose to such a pitch, that they insisted upon the withdrawal of the French soldiers, who, consequently, returned to Elba, under the terms of a very honourable capitulation. The English colours then floated again on the island, but the occupation was not ratified by the Government at home, and we some time afterwards learned that our flag was withdrawn, even before the conclusion of the general peace.

The intelligence of the latter important event reached us on board the *Arethusa*, as we were cruising in the Gulf of Smyrna, whither we had received orders to repair soon after joining the fleet on our return from our expedition to Pianosa. The general feeling which this news created in our service, was one of disappointment, in which, for my part, I could not share, as I conceived that the cessation of hostilities might tend to facilitate my immediate return home, whenever my appointed period of exile should have expired.

In the mean time, my sentiments for Sophia remained entirely unaltered. Indeed, the secluded life which I led—with a captain whom I despised and hated, and with brother officers who were indifferent to me—tended to maintain and to exalt that all-absorbing feeling of exclusive devotion. So regularly as the day came upon which, according to the agreement entered upon, I was to write to my cousin, so regularly was my letter written, however remote the opportunity might be for transmitting it; and each successive letter conveyed, though in the most reserved and respectful terms, the deep and solemn expression of my undeviating attachment. But since the first answer I had received from Sophia, no communication whatever from her reached me until the end of the year 1802. I then received two letters, sealed in black, and conveying to me the mournful intelligence of the death of my father, after a very short illness. The first of these was from Lady Sheerness, and it contained many most interesting particulars as to Lord Arlingford's last moments. The second was from my brother; he merely stated the sad fact in a few words: but the postscript was in Sophia's own hand. Though she expressed to me thus, in the tenderest terms, her sisterly sorrow and condolence, I felt a strange foreboding when I considered that she had chosen for imparting them—not my aunt's letter, but my brother's; and even amid the deep grief into which I was plunged by my unexpected bereavement, I was keenly sensitive to this incident.

With the utmost anxiety, I again and again read over every word traced in Sophia's postscript, and I could find nothing which altered my first impression on perusing it: but one expression struck me *more and more as I reflected upon it*. While she in no way alludes to any of my letters, my cousin said, "Do pray let me hear fro

you soon." It seemed to me as if there was something of reproach in this entreaty. Can it so be, thought I, that my letters have not reached her? They were forwarded with the greatest care and precaution through the Admiralty. She surely must have received them. To obviate, however, as much as lay in my power, any such occurrence as I apprehended, I seized the opportunity, when answering her short postscript, to recapitulate the date of each former letter.

The time was now fast approaching when my period of probation would be completed; and nothing, as I then conceived, could prevent my obtaining leave to proceed forthwith to England. How my heart now recalled every circumstance of my former return—each a blessed earnest of the faithful welcome there prepared for me! But, alas! ere the summer of that long-expected year had set in, we were officially informed that war had been again proclaimed.

Lord Nelson soon afterwards arrived to take the command of the fleet; and as he was, as usual, ill provided with frigates, the services of the *Arethusa* were peremptorily required. So wild was my desire to reach England by the appointed time, that I one day overcame my reluctance to ask any favour of M'Ross, and requested him to assist me in obtaining a short leave of absence.

"Why, this is a curious time," answered he, "to wish to leave the ship. You said nothing of this to me while the peace lasted, and now that the war has broken out again, you discover that you have important business in England. It is rather strange!"

"It is an unfortunate coincidence, to be sure, sir," replied I; "but the fact is not the less such as I have stated."

"Well, then, you had better write to the admiral, who, as you say, is a friend of yours. As for me, I cannot do without you now that you are acting first-lieutenant, unless you are replaced by another officer. So do not ask me to interfere about it."

The coarse insinuations thrown out by M'Ross did not deter me from writing to Lord Nelson himself, respectfully entreating his intercession in a matter which I described as most essential to all my future prospects. But untoward circumstances long delayed the reception of this letter; and when the kind answer of the heroic admiral at length reached me, I was in a position which rendered his assistance unavailing.

We continued, in the mean time, to cruise in the Gulf of Marseilles; and I there received one evening, by an express sent from Malta to the fleet, my usual file of London papers. As I was perusing their contents, my attention was arrested by the following paragraph:—

"We are happy to be able to announce, though as yet without any positive authority, that the preliminaries have at length been arranged for the long-contemplated marriage of a young and noble *marquis*, who has very lately succeeded to the honours and titles of *his illustrious house*, with his very near relative, whose princely *fortune is one of her smallest attractions*."

I started to my feet, as if stung by an adder, and then striking

my head in frantic despair: "Fool, fool!" exclaimed I, "has not every foreboding of my soul and the warning of every friend that I have known, pointed to this inevitable result! Then it is so, after all, Royaumont,—our destinies are alike."

"Are you ill, sir?" said Richards, who, after a low rap, had just entered. "You are paler than when your arm was broken at Pianosa!"

"It is nothing," answered I, hastily. "What do you want?"

"With your leave, my lord, I wish to say a word to you."

"Can you wait for an hour, Richards?"

"Certainly, sir."

"Very well, come back then."

He retired, and I continued pacing my solitary cabin, in vain endeavouring to collect my frenzied thoughts, until he again appeared.

"Why, surely, it is not a quarter of an hour since you were here last, Richards?" said I.

"It is more than an hour, sir, by your leave; but shall I come again?"

"No, Richards, tell me at once what you have to say."

"I merely wish to make you aware, my lord, that I think before long we shall have mutiny aboard this ship."

"Indeed, Richards! What can the motives or pretext be?"

"Why, my lord," said he, in a low whisper, "the captain is hated in a terrible way!"

"I feared as much. What can be done?"

"Why, you know best, sir, how far you can speak to him or not. All I can say is, there is not in his majesty's service a better or a finer crew than this is. Well, what by bad management, what by bad language, what by unjust punishment, they are so mad with him, that I should not be surprised any night to hear that they had cut his throat, thrown him overboard, and proclaimed you captain."

"That is no English means of promotion for me," said I; "but as the men know they can have no truer friend than I am, try and persuade them to trust to my doing the best I can for them; and for Heaven's sake warn them well of the awful consequences which any act of insubordination must entail upon them. That will do, Richards, now; just come in to me for the morning-watch to-morrow."

"Morning-watch, my lord? Why, that is not for twelve hours to come."

"Well, I dare say I shall remain here till then; and as I have something in my thoughts which might prevent my noticing the hour, you had better knock and remind me."

The dark night came over me; but it could throw no shade over the harrowing subject of my distracted visions. Long before the appointed time Richards re-entered.

"Beg pardon, sir; but I can't bear to hear you walking up and down so the whole night. Won't you take a little rest, or a little refreshment?"

"I want nothing, my good friend," said I, laying my hand on

his sturdy shoulder ; and he withdrew, shaking his honest head with an expression of the most heartfelt condolence.

As I could keep no account of the flight of time, I was again surprised when I heard his low rap at my door about daybreak. He now entered with a cup of coffee and a biscuit, of which, at his earnest solicitation, I slightly partook.

" Beg pardon, my lord," said he, " but I trust it's no more bad news from Elmswater Castle."

" Oh no, Richards," answered I ; " on the contrary, all there are well, and particularly joyful."

" Well, that is a blessing, sir, at all events."

I proceeded on deck. The fresh morning air, as it revived my drooping senses, brought but a stronger and sadder consciousness of my situation. I attended mechanically to the duties of the watch ; but the ship, the sea, the world, all appeared altered and strange to me. I felt as if life and I had parted company ; as if my spirit, though still hovering around the regions of its former abode, was severed from them for ever.

In the course of the day we were met by a large vessel, to all appearance a first-rate frigate, and we beat to quarters at her approach. When within gunshot she hoisted the French flag, and a very sharp running-fight immediately commenced between us. The enemy was very superior to us in weight of metal, and his well-directed fire told with fatal effect upon us. It was returned, however, with great spirit on our side, and ere the engagement had lasted more than an hour, both ships were very much crippled.

" Rockingham," said the captain to me about this time, " these fellows fight very well. I don't know how on earth we can get the better of them : they have such a confounded superiority over us in the weight of their guns, and this ship is now almost unmanageable."

" We have nothing to do, sir, I believe," answered I, " but to go on firing as hard and as well as we can."

" Except we try to board her."

" Board her, sir !—that would be rather a desperate enterprise."

" You need not go except you like," retorted the captain, resuming his usual sarcastic manner, as he ever did when the slightest difference of opinion would arise.

" I will certainly go, sir, with your leave, if any one does ; but I would rather the responsibility of such a decision rested with you than with me."

" Of course it will rest with me alone," replied the captain ; and for a few minutes nothing more was said upon the matter.

The fire of the enemy, however, appeared to increase, and though ours was perhaps still better directed, the *Arethusa* and her gallant crew suffered considerably.

" I shall give orders to board with all our boats," said M'Ross again to me, after a short interval ; " will you take the command of them, or shall I give it to Netherby ?"

" I will take it by all means, sir, if you think proper."

" Very well, then do the best you can."

I immediately proceeded to give the necessary directions, and as the sea was calm and the two ships were now within three hundred yards of each other, our boats soon reached the enemy, and we boarded him on four different points.

"Sharp work this, Richards," said I, as we were clambering together into the mizen-chains of the French frigate.

"It is indeed, my lord; and my notion is, the captain must have been pretty well tired of the entertainment before he gave orders to make such an attempt."

So impetuous was our almost simultaneous attack on four different quarters, that the enemy's crew, who appeared to have very severely suffered during the engagement, were at first driven back, and we succeeded in making good our footing on the quarter-deck. Wildly excited as I was, far more by the intelligence of the previous day than by the maddening emotions of the hour, I could see neither danger nor difficulty; and I was so well supported by the native and dauntless courage of my followers, that we carried everything before us. After the first moment of surprise, however, the enemy rallied about the mainmast, and as their men were now rushing up in great numbers to the rescue from the lower deck, a force far superior to ours was soon collected there.

"Forward, my gallant fellows!" cried I; and with Richards at my side, we were, ere long, all engaged hand to hand in the most desperate close conflict I have ever witnessed. Such were the tumult and confusion, that no longer could anything be discerned saving the flashes of the bright steel arms, as, with the rapidity of lightning, the deadly passes and thrusts were exchanged all around.

Who is this whose voice rises so high above the roar of the mortal affray? Every distinctive sign has been torn or burnt from off his uniform, saving that remnant of gold-lace upon his hat, and yet he must be an officer by his noble bearing, and by the chivalrous ardour with which he leads on his men. Upon his fate depends the issue of the day.

"Stand by me, Richards," cried I, "for we must cut down or take this man." I rushed forward, and the bravest now gave way before us, saving he alone. We met, and we engaged hand to hand.

"He is wounded, he is falling, Richards! For God's sake do not strike!"

But Richard's cutlass was already buried deep in the manly chest of our opponent. He dropped to the ground and his head was uncovered; he passed his hand slowly over his brow, and then extending it to me he murmured, "*Edouard, quelle rencontre!*"

It was Royaumont!

"Stand back, you villains, stand back!" cried I to my men, as I cast myself over the body of my prostrate friend; but what power could arrest the fury of the hell-fiends now unloosed around me? Each churl's weapon drank deep of the noblest blood in France.

"Move forward, my lord," cried Richards, "or we shall be surrounded and taken."

"Never mind me, my faithful friend," exclaimed I; "let me remain and die here."

"For Heaven's sake, my lord, don't give way; our men are beaten back, and without you all will be lost."

It was but too true: our much-reduced band was now in its turn surrounded, and was falling back. In vain I endeavoured to rally them; we were fairly overpowered by numbers. One of our midshipmen, seeing the game was hopeless, sprang overboard, and he was soon followed by several of the men. I attempted, with the few that remained, still to make a head, but the enemy pressed hard upon us from all sides, and I received a stunning blow from some blunt instrument which felled me to the deck. A few minutes of unconsciousness followed, then a heavy fall and a deep plunge, during which a herculean arm was still cast round me and supporting me. The cold waves revived me. When I opened my eyes, I was seated by Richards in the pinnace, and we were again almost alongside of the *Arethusa*.

"Well, so you have managed to get away," said M'Ross, as soon as we stood once more on the quarter-deck; "how did it all happen?"

"Perhaps you will allow me to refer you to Richards, sir, for the details. I am still quite bewildered from a severe blow I have received."

"If such is the case, you had better go down to the surgeon."

As, besides the contusion on my head, I had two slight wounds from which the blood flowed profusely, it was not considered necessary to bleed me, but rest was most strictly prescribed. For some time I could hear from below the thunder of the guns as the contest proceeded with unabated spirit on both sides. At length our fire appeared to cease, while that of the enemy continued; and I soon afterwards received the visit of one of my brother officers, informing me that we had been joined by one of our line-of-battle ships, to which the French frigate had surrendered, having lost all her officers, with the exception of two midshipmen. "I am just come from her," said my shipmate; "she is a shocking wreck."

"Is the captain dead?"

"Dead! I should think so; with twenty mortal murders on his crown, too."

"Alas! poor *Royaumont*!"

"Well, but," rejoined my companion, "you have no idea of the state M'Ross is in. The line-of-battle ship claims the prize. He swears that if he had commanded the boarders he would have taken her. I should like to have seen him there, rather. Richards says he never saw in his whole life anything like it, or any one fight as you did."

When my comrade left me, I fell into a state of drowsiness, in which I must have remained some time, for the shades of evening were closing upon me as I was aroused by Richards standing at my bedside.

"For Heaven's sake, my lord, come on deck if you can," said he; "we have already mutiny, and we shall have murder before long. The captain must have lost his senses to treat the men so on such a day."

A loud shout from above here came in melancholy confirmation of this intelligence. I raised myself, with Richard's help, and was soon on deck. I there beheld, on one side, M'Ross, surrounded by his officers and a party of marines; and on the other, nearly the whole of the ship's crew, evidently in a state of the completest insubordination.

"Can I assist you, sir?" said I to the captain. "Perhaps you will allow me to say a few words to these misguided men?"

"Not a syllable," returned M'Ross; "and if those two mutinous villains do not surrender immediately, you, marines, fire into the whole set."

I would have said something in expostulation; but unfortunately, the men, who had cheered me loudly the moment I appeared on deck, renewed their shouts in my favour; and ere I could speak again, the fury of the captain was turned upon me.

"Perhaps you had better put yourself at their head at once," exclaimed he, "and take the command of the ship."

"You know well, Captain M'Ross, that I have not deserved this from you."

Upon this, a loud cheer again broke from the men.

"Silence, sir, or I will order you to be arrested the first," screamed out the enraged captain; and then approaching me with clenched teeth, he muttered in a low voice: "You are a disgrace to the king's service!"

This was too much for me to bear. The smouldering fury which the events of the last twenty-four hours had kindled within me, now burst forth beyond all powers of control.

"There is my answer, vile slanderer," said I; and M'Ross fell prostrate at my feet.

"Hurrah! hurrah!" shouted the delighted crew. "Pitch him overboard, and take the command."

M'Ross, though bewildered and stunned by the violence of my blow, was not deficient in personal courage. He was soon on his legs again, and ordered the marines to arrest me. They hesitated for a moment, for I was very popular with them; but I was now restored to my self-possession, and handing to the sergeant my sword, which I held sheathed in my hand, I surrendered, saying to the men:—

"I have forfeited my life; for God's sake submit, as I do now, before you have brought matters to a more fearful extremity."

Four men now accompanied me to the door of my cabin, where I remained a close prisoner. I afterwards heard that the mutiny had been quelled, thanks to some reciprocal concessions; and that, with the assistance of the line-of-battle ship, our damages were so far repaired as to enable us slowly to proceed to Gibraltar where we arrived some days afterwards.

I there learned that all steps had been taken to bring me to a court-martial, and that M'Ross intended to follow up the charges against me with the full activity and vindictiveness of his nature. But now I was grown indifferent to all that could occur.

CHAPTER XXXI.

And but thou love me, let them find me there ;
My life were better ended by their hate,
Than death prorogued, wanting of thy love.

ROMEO AND JULIET.

THE strictest orders had been given from the first day of my confinement to forbid any one from communicating with me ; so that on my passage to Gibraltar, and during my stay there, with the exception of the marines who attended upon me, two persons alone were permitted to see me.

The first of these was a stranger, an American by birth, and a lawyer or attorney by profession. The object of his visit was to offer his services for my ensuing trial. These I civilly declined, and the stranger at last was persuaded to withdraw, not, however, until he had warned me, in the most emphatic manner, of the serious and almost hopeless position in which I was placed by the apparently incontrovertible charges proffered against me.

The second visit I received was far more welcome. As I was brooding over my hapless condition, and fervently praying that the awful issue to all my sorrows might not be long delayed, I was told that a lady, who had obtained a special permission from the governor, desired to see me. I requested that she should be immediately admitted.

The door had scarcely been closed upon the new comer, and the dark mantilla had not yet been removed, when I was clasped in the arms of Dolores !

"Let me look at you, my son, my wandering child !" exclaimed she. "Ay, you are the full-grown man I always expected you would be. Would you have known me again ?"

"Who that has seen your eyes, Dolores, could ever forget them ? You are handsomer than ever."

"Don't you talk of eyes, Edward," said she. "But how pale and wan you are. Care and sorrow have preyed sadly upon your youth and beauty, which, by the bye, I must no longer talk of, now that you are a man. I trust that matters are not so desperate as it is reported in the town."

"What do they say there, Dolores ?"

"Why, that you nearly killed the captain, and attempted to take the command of the ship, where you had raised a great rebellion, and Heaven knows what else."

"Are these calumnies credited ?"

"Some believe them, but many others say they are all invented by the captain, who was jealous of you from the first."

"And what do you think, Dolores?"

"Do you ask me that question seriously? Do you believe that I can look on any reflection made upon your character otherwise than as a disgraceful slander."

"Thank you, my lovely Dolores," said I, pressing her hand to my lips. "The confidence and sympathy of your faithful heart imparts all the consolation mine can now receive. But we have said enough, and too much about me. Now tell me all about yourself. How is Almanza?"

"He has been dead for more than two years."

"Indeed! I hope your little poniard had nothing to do with it."

"No," said she, "it was not required; but I made him pay dearly for something which we need not remember now."

"And so you are a disconsolate widow?"

"Exactly," answered she, while her laughing eyes bore but slight confirmation to this assent.

"But how came you to Gibraltar?"

"I have been here for some time, following up a claim of Almanza's family upon the English Government. I heard two days ago, of your arrival and of the sad position in which you are placed; and I thereupon obtained leave to see you, as a special favour of the governor, who is a friend of mine."

"I am glad to hear it; and you are alone in the town, Dolores?"

"I am with a cousin of mine, who escorted me here."

"Indeed! that is better still."

"You need not be making any observations, or drawing any conclusions, Señor Edouardo," said Dolores, playfully touching my cheek with her fan. "My cousin is sixty and the governor is only a year or two younger. But, by the bye, tell me of your cousin, and how your love affairs have progressed since we parted? Well, what on earth is the matter with you?" continued she, as I shook my head despondingly. "It cannot be, Edouardo; it is impossible—she surely is not dead!"

"No, Dolores, she is not dead;—she is, I trust, well and happy."

"Then you are deceived and betrayed after all. I always thought it would come to that. Ah! my poor child; I can feel for what you endure. She is married then, and to your brother?"

"No, Dolores, not yet."

"But it is to be.—She has written it to you?"

"No, Dolores, she has not."

"Other members of your family have?"

"No."

"Then what is amiss?"

"I have reason to believe that the marriage is settled."

"Only settled;—oh, that is quite another matter. Nothing of that kind is settled till it is concluded. Now come and inform me of all that has occurred between you and her since we last met and I shall, perhaps, myself be able to tell you how matters really stand."

She listened with the most earnest attention and interest to

short narrative I gave her of my weary return to England, of the welcome I there received, and of the circumstances which led to my last departure from home. More than once I could mark the tear standing in her bright eye;—more than once her lips were pressed to my forehead, as I proceeded with my sad tale. When it was ended, she desired to see the paragraph in the London newspaper, upon which my principal apprehensions were founded. She read it attentively, and then said :

"I can see nothing here save a report that one of the hundreds or thousands of English marquises is going to marry one of his relatives. I really cannot perceive much cause for alarm in these few lines."

"Alas, Dolores ! we do not reckon our marquises by thousands or even by hundreds. I have well looked over their list in our peerage, and I have ascertained that none, saving my brother, can at all be alluded to here."

"And do you mean to say," replied Dolores warmly, "that upon this vague report, from the unknown editor of a newspaper, you were prepared to condemn your noble-minded and affectionate cousin, whose heart was for three years in the grave with you, while all the rest of the world had forgotten you ? You are no more worthy of her, for that suspicion, than she would be worthy of one smile from you, if it could be justified."

I raised my eyes, and they met those of Dolores.

"Now indeed," exclaimed I, "you look and you speak as an angel sent from Heaven, to redeem me from the uttermost depths of distraction and despair. But alas ! think how very probable it is that this rumour should be true. My brother is as much my superior in all personal as in all worldly qualifications ; and during three long years that I have been far away, he has been ever with her."

"Well, but if there is some probability in this report, whose fault is it ? Who deserted your cousin's side at the very age when her heart was first opening to the influence of love ? Who left her to contend alone against the seductions of a young man, as gifted and as handsome, you say, as yourself, and whose advances were countenanced and supported by every member of your family ? How hard it is for men to understand the feelings of a woman, to remember that we are frail, ever failing as themselves, and that if neglected and abandoned, we must be lost !"

"But, Dolores, it was at her wish, at her express command and desire, that I consented to leave my home."

"You silly child, should you have listened to such a request ? Of course, as these matters are conducted in your country, she could not have married you against the wish of all your family, when you were both only about twenty ; but you must not think that we women expect you to follow all our injunctions, and this *was* a case, among many others, in which disobedience would far better have deserved to be rewarded than compliance."

"There is much truth in all you say, Dolores," replied I in deep

sadness, "yet you now torture me still more than you consoled me just now."

"It is not without a motive, Edward: I see clearly from what has occurred within these last few minutes, that the whole happiness of your life depends upon the decision of your cousin. Were anything finally or irrevocably determined, you must have heard something of it by this time, otherwise than by a very doubtful and vague newspaper report. I, therefore, do not think that all can yet be lost. I do believe, however, that your prolonged absence, more particularly now that the appointed time for your return home has arrived, might very probably lead to what may otherwise still be prevented. You have but one single course to pursue; you must this very day proceed to England and claim your cousin's heart and hand, which are yours, by the truest and surest of all titles."

"Alas! Dolores," replied I, scarcely able to repress a smile: "you little know how I am situated, how severe is the discipline observed in a case like mine, and how impossible it is for me to stir one step from this cabin."

"Impossible! nothing is impossible in such a cause as this. What prevents your running out when I open the door to go?"

"Nothing," answered I again smiling, "saving a sturdy sentry there, on that very threshold, who, with his notions of duty, would think as little of running me through the body, as you would, Dolores, of fixing one of your long black pins into these braided mazes of matchless hair."

"Well, but it would not be so hard to stab him: I have still my little poniard about me, and can lend it you."

"Ay, Dolores, but there are hundreds of others on this ship who would seize me ere I could leave the deck, or even reach it."

"Well then, supposing you were to slip on my gown and mantilla, and leave the ship in my stead, while I wait here in yours. How I shall laugh at them, when they discover who their prisoner is."

"They certainly would not lose by the exchange, Dolores; but alas! I am no longer the little Edward who used to roam about in your dressing-room at Oratava, and upon whom you and your maid found such pleasure in trying on your mantillas. See here, now that I am standing, tall as you are I am taller still, and you in your turn are my child, my little Dolores."

"It is quite incredible: you are a head higher than me," said she. "The disguise is out of the question."

"Still, Dolores, you are right, and to-morrow at latest, dead or alive, I leave this ship."

"That is spoken like yourself, Edward—like my own pupil. But how will you accomplish it?"

"It will be a very hazardous and desperate undertaking, in which failure may be death, and success must be dishonour. Still it shall be attempted, Dolores, were it only to preserve *esteem*, if nothing else is saved."

"Tell me then, Edward, how you intend to act, and how I can assist you?"

"In the first place, I have very little money, Dolores, and I must not attempt to obtain any now, as that might excite suspicion. Can you advance what will be sufficient for my purpose?"

"Of course, Edward; by this evening you shall have enough to purchase a frigate of your own."

"I thank you, my generous Dolores. Now tell me, do you live in the town here?"

"I do."

"And you can conceal me in your house for one night?"

"Certainly."

"Then this is, I believe, my best plan, and, indeed, my only chance. I was told this morning, that, in consequence of some repairs which have been ordered on the lower deck, I should be removed to a temporary cabin, which has been hastily fitted up on the deck above."

"Where I saw all those great cannons, when I came down."

"Exactly, Dolores."

"But you will be further there from the sea, and still more surrounded than here."

"Ay, Dolores; but then I shall have, I hope, a porthole, or at least half a one, for my window, through which I am not yet too portly to slip. Once in the sea, I am in my own element, and shall not be long in reaching your house. Now, supposing I were there already in safety, Dolores, how should we act?"

"Let me see. I would first myself accompany you over to Algeiras, whither I have obtained leave to go as often as I please, either with my cousin or with one servant. I have friends there who have horses, and who would willingly give or lend one, which would take you safe to Cadiz or to San Lucar. When there, you will easily find some boat which could convey you on to Lisbon, and the passage from Lisbon to England will soon be accomplished."

"Nothing can be better laid out, my dear Dolores, and with God's blessing all will be so accomplished, if I can but get to your house without being discovered."

"I am thinking of one thing though, Edward; you must not stay long with me; for when your flight is discovered, the authorities may search my house, knowing as they do that we are acquainted."

"You are right again, Dolores. It certainly would be better if your boat picked me up in the harbour. I can easily swim at least half a mile."

"Well, then, I could manage that the boat which will take us to Algeiras may be here in the neighbourhood of the frigate at any time you mention. What do you think will be the best hour for the purpose?"

"About dusk I should say, Dolores; the men are often in the habit of bathing at that time, and should a person be noticed swimming in the neighbourhood of the ship, it perhaps would excite very great attention."

We were here interrupted by a low knock at the door, and a sergeant of marines entered, to inform Dolores that she had been with me for more than an hour.

"Indeed!" said she in her best English; "then give me five minutes more, and I will follow you."

Even the stern marine could not withstand the magic influence of those suppliant eyes. He half closed the door with a grim smile, upon which my fair visitor said,—

"An hour was all I could obtain, and you have no idea with what trouble and solicitation. But now, farewell; to-morrow evening, as early as six, I shall be waiting for you in my boat, and within half a mile of the frigate on the side towards Algesiras."

"Very well, my high-souled Dolores; only your little vessel must have some distinctive mark."

"Will a white and red pendant be sufficient? I can make a flag, you know."

"You can, indeed, Dolores; and this is not the first time that you have thus recalled me to life. But why are you again shrouding yourself in that jealous mantilla, which so effectually conceals all that the eye could wish to dwell upon. Must you already leave me?"

"I must, indeed," said she, extending her hand.

"Is that your farewell, Dolores?" exclaimed I.

"It is, señor. Have not you yourself reminded me that you are no longer the child I saved at Teneriffe?"

"That was an unguarded observation, Dolores; but I am not grown much taller or older within the last half-hour, and then ——"

"And then, señor, I had not heard of your base mistrust of your cousin's affection, for which I have not yet forgiven you."

"I would claim my pardon of her and of you at your feet, Dolores; but once there, perhaps I could rise no more."

"For shame, Edward! this is still worse. No, no, I will reserve my kiss for you until you are free and safe on our Spanish soil;" and raising her fan with a matchless gesture of admonition, she glided from before me.

On the following morning early I was removed, as I had expected, to the small temporary cabin constructed in the upper deck, and my new prison was lighted, as I had hoped, by one of the ports, the lower half of which was left open. To my great regret, I found that I had been placed on the side of the ship which looked towards the town, so that I could not discern Dolores' boat. As, however, I did not hear from her in the course of the day, I could not doubt that all the necessary arrangements had been carried out, and I therefore, at the appointed hour, bared myself to the waist and sprang unhesitatingly into the bright blue waters below me. I glided as noiselessly as I could along the side of the *Arethusa*, to escape any observation either from the deck or from a few sailors, who were themselves bathing in her neighbourhood; and making the greatest part of my way under water, I was soon in full view of a heavy fishing-boat bearing the promised signal. This vessel made towards me soon as I was discerned, and before long I was safe on board it.

"I do not know how to apologize for my costume," said I to Dolores, who, breathless and pale with anxiety as she watched my progress from the ship, now hardly ventured to glance at me, while her cheeks glowed with the deepest and most enchanting blush I ever witnessed.

"Was it necessary to come so?" said she at length, as the scarcely-restrained smile more than neutralized the slight frown into which she attempted to contract her brow.

"Absolutely necessary, my dear Dolores," replied I. "I have kept every portion of my dress which I might venture to retain, and happily it is the most important. But the sight of a man swimming about the Arethusa with a coat or a shirt upon his shoulders, would most certainly have put a very early end to our adventure."

"Well, but you might have told me of this yesterday," continued she, really annoyed at the suppressed laughter to which the little incident had given rise among our crew.

"I assure you, Dolores, that I did not think of it at the time, or I certainly should have mentioned to you this circumstance, had it been only to request you to bring a cloak for me. The evening breeze is not so very warm."

"If I had a cloak, I should not lend it you," said the scarcely-pacified Dolores, though there was more anger in her words than in her voice. "We could so easily have started an hour later, and much of this might have been spared to me."

"Come, come, *querida*; within half an hour it would have been too dark for me ever to find your boat, and as our men are not allowed to bathe after nightfall, I should have been probably fired at by the sentries. However, if I have done wrong, I am punished for it: I feel very cold."

"I am delighted," said Dolores; but ere our eyes had met once more, my shoulders were enclosed in her own mantilla. "Are you warmer now, you good-for-nothing reprobate?" resumed she, after a few minutes' silence.

"Oh, so much warmer."

"Do you know what I was thinking of just now, Edward, and what made me smile even when I wished to be angry with you?"

"No, Dolores, what was it?"

"I was recalling the story you used to tell me at Oratava of the day when you were so cruelly beaten by the order and under the eyes of your schoolmistress. I always hated her for it until to-day, when I see that you may have deserved it."

"Well, Dolores, it is no fault of hers if I have not turned out better than I have. If you have so far recovered from your first indignation as to look more closely at my hapless shoulders, you will see there to this day the marks of that morning's adventure; at least so my shipmates have often told me when bathing with me."

"Those marks are there, indeed, my poor Edward. Oh! I hate her more than ever," said Dolores; and I think I felt something till warmer and still softer than her slender fingers pressing the light but indelible traces which she had discovered.

"Well, we must forgive her now, Dolores, for it is already many years since I wept upon her early grave."

"Indeed," said my companion sadly. "She was your first love after all, I believe, you wicked boy."

"So I have thought too, Dolores, ever since I learnt at Oratava what love was."

"It was not at Oratava that you first learned that, as you well know. And now, sir, how do you intend to land; do you think I am going to walk through the streets of Algeiras with a cabalero thus attired?"

"Ah! to be sure, I forgot that, Dolores. Well, I had better, I suppose, make up the most complete costume I can by purchasing different articles from these worthy men here." Following up this idea, I bought a sash from one, a jacket from another, a cap from a third; and thus attired, I landed on the shores of Spain almost in the costume of one of her own children.

I accompanied my lovely guide to the house of a Spanish merchant, with whose family she was intimately acquainted, and where she herself resided whenever she came over to Algeiras. Ere my story had even been alluded to, I was assured, with the most cordial courtesy, that everything there was at my disposal; and greater still was the sympathy evinced towards me when Dolores added a slight outline of my tale. What further particulars she communicated subsequently to the daughter of the house, a gay, dark-eyed girl, I did not exactly overhear; but I suspect they related to a very recent incident, as there was no end to smiling and blushing between them for nearly a quarter of an hour, accompanied with invocations to every female saint in the calendar.

My first care, after exchanging the necessary amount of compliments with my kind hosts, was to procure myself a suitable travelling costume; my next, to inquire about a horse; but one was at once offered to me, in such pressing terms, by my new friends, that I found it impossible to refuse the generous present.

Dolores' letters and money having been prepared for me beforehand, I was in a condition to start within an hour after our landing.

"It is sad to lose you so soon," said she, the tears now standing in her laughing eyes; "but I would not have it on my conscience to detain you for a single hour, as you have already been delayed far too long. I suppose that I need not ask you to think sometimes of Dolores; though I fear I must wish that we may never meet again."

"May Heaven reward and bless you as you deserve, my noble-hearted preserver!" exclaimed I.

We embraced this time, and then we parted.

I proceeded on my journey with as much speed as was consistent with the comfort of my high-spirited Andalusian steed, and I soon arrived at Cadiz. I there found, as Dolores had already informed me, her brother, Don José Gutierrez, who received me with ex-

token of friendship, and who, after entertaining me for a couple of days with the greatest hospitality, procured me an American passport and a small vessel, which undertook to convey me to Lisbon.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Oh, Desdemona! away! away! away!

I REACHED the mouth of the Tagus after a very favourable passage, and was so fortunate as to find in the roads a British vessel taking in her cargo for Liverpool. The captain, upon such terms as I was well disposed to grant him, was happy to receive me on board as a passenger, and I thus succeeded in leaving Lisbon before—as far as I was able to ascertain—any accounts had reached our station there of my evasion from Gibraltar.

This time, however, my passage was slow, tedious, and constantly delayed either by accidents or by contrary winds. Days flew by while we scarcely neared our destination, and my frenzied anxiety to behold England was at length worked up to the highest pitch. Night and morning I paced the narrow deck, frantically urging the captain and the men to carry more sail, calling upon the sky and the sea to offer no further impediment to our progress, and adjuring the absent Sophia to forgive my distrust and my desertion. I thought I could hear a voice ever whispering in my ear, that each moment, as it flew by, could still have retrieved all had I been at home. So excited became I at last by the apprehensions which tortured me incessantly, that the whole crew began to entertain serious misgivings as to my state of mind.

I well remember that one dark night, as, during a violent storm of rain, I was pouring forth, on my knees, my distracted prayers to the elements and to the God who rules them, I heard one honest seaman saying to another:

"There is a young lad who will not be long at large when once he is in England."

"I rather think not, too, poor fellow!" was the answer.

At length, after three weary weeks, the low shores of Albion broke upon our view,—not as I had seen them before, arrayed in the splendour of their short-lived summer, but dark, misty, and cloud-girt. And yet how welcome—with all the hope they still contained, with all the joy they might still have in store for me!

When I had landed at Liverpool, and paid my passage, I again procured myself the dress of a common seaman, adding to my former costume, for the purpose of better insuring my concealment, a ponderous black wig, which entirely covered the light brown locks that might still have betrayed me. Thus equipped, I proceeded, without any further loss of time, to London; and on leaving the coach there, I at once walked to my brother's residence. I had not seen that house since the days of my early childhood, nor having inhabited it during my short stay in town three years

viciously. My hand trembled violently as I raised the knocker, and I could scarcely recover myself sufficiently to answer the gruff inquiry of the burly porter who immediately opened the door. Alas! every trace of mourning for my father had already disappeared, and the portly attendant was again arrayed in all the splendour of the Rockingham livery.

"Well, my fine fellow, what's your business?" said he to me.

"I should wish to know—I only wanted to inquire, if Lord Edward is in town."

"Not that I know of."

"But he is shortly expected, is not he?"

"I heard nothing about it," replied the porter, preparing to close the door.

This will never do, thought I; I must find some means of prolonging the conversation.

"I believe he has written to you lately," said I.

"Written to me! Lord bless you, no. I never see'd him, nor he never see'd me; inasmuch as I have only joined the family since he last went to sea."

"However, you are the porter here, are not you?"

"There is no denying that."

"Well, when I left Lord Edward in the Mediterranean—'William,' said he to me, 'perhaps you will get to London before me. I wish, therefore, you would call at my brother's house, see the porter, and give him these two guineas from me for the trouble he has had in the little commission I wrote to him about.—My brother will pay him besides for that.' So, my lord said—but perhaps I had better call again, when you have received the letter."

I was preparing to withdraw, but I now no longer found the same unwillingness in the other quarter to carry on the conversation.

"Stop a moment, old fellow," said my companion, "you have just left Lord Edward, you say. I hope his lordship was quite well when you last see'd him; and you are sure," continued he, his stern features relaxing into a broad grin, "that he give'd you that message for me?"

"Oh, quite sure; and as the money is not mine, I wish you would take charge of it."

"By all means, if you think proper," answered the stately official, evidently anxious to oblige me in this matter; and the two guineas were soon transferred to his broad, gold-laced pocket.

"Now," said I, "you must tell me some news of the family. I suppose they are in the country at this time of the year?"

"No, they're in town for the marriage."

"The marriage!" faltered I.

"Ay, the young marquis is going to marry his cousin—Miss Sophia Waldegrave."

"Indeed!—and shortly?"

"The settlements was all signed this morning; and to-morrow at eleven, the ceremony comes off at that church there at the end of the street. And I'll tell you what, as you seems a friend of

family, I should recommend your being in the neighbourhood of this house to-morrow morning. There will be some refreshments going on, when, I dare say, Mr. Elders may allow you to have a share. I'll manage that, if you but come to me."

"Thank you, very much; and so the settlements were signed this morning?"

"They was—I heard the lawyers saying so, as they came out of my lord's study about an hour ago."

"And I suppose that everybody is delighted?"

"I should think so, indeed. It is what everybody wished—and no one so much as the poor old lord. Pity it is, to be sure, that he did not live to see it! We only took off mourning for him last week."

"And the young lady herself—is she very happy?"

"I believe you. It would have done your heart good to see her go out from here about an hour ago with my lord. 'I suppose we may go alone,' said his lordship, 'now the settlements is signed.' She said nothing—but you should have seen how she pressed his arm, and looked up in his face."

"And Lord Edward is not expected back for the marriage?"

"No, I believe not. I even heard it rumoured in the house that he is to be tried—in foreign parts—for some curious offences; but you know best about that. As to me, I never can believe anything derogatory to his lordship. No more does anybody in the house, at least any of us below."

Just then I heard the voice of the butler in the hall within, and fearing that I might be recognised by him, I took leave of my new acquaintance.

As I hastily left the neighbourhood of my paternal abode, I felt so utterly confused and prostrate with the intelligence which I had there received, that I scarcely knew whither to direct my forlorn steps. One sentiment, however, plainly prevailed over all others, and steered my heart to one final determination. At all events, murmured I, no attempts shall be made on my part to offer any obstacles to the union thus concluded, or to mar, by any token of my presence in London, the happiness which Sophia may thus be permitted to enjoy.

On the following day, at eleven o'clock, I was again at the door of my brother's house, still in my newly re-adopted attire. A large crowd was assembled there, eager to witness any portion of the approaching ceremony.

Soon a low murmur arose, and then three loud cheers. Effectually concealed by the dense line of spectators before me, I beheld, unperceived, the doors of the stately mansion thrown open, and the bride and bridegroom slowly advancing, followed by Lady *Sheerness*. Never had I seen *Elmswater* looking handsomer or more commanding:—and Sophia! What was the winning sternness of Mrs. Wentworth's brow, the magic charm of the eyes of *Dolores*, the fascinating glance of Lady Edward, or the ingenuous oveliness of *Bianca Salvi*—what were they all to the incomparable majesty of that beauty!

I could well mark how she smiled upon Elmswater, as, with the most respectful deference, he accompanied her and Lady Sheerness to the first carriage, in which they proceeded to the church, ere he entered alone the splendid chariot in which he was to convey back the partner of his exalted station—the companion of his life!

One more cheer from the crowd, and all moved rapidly onward.

In the short passage from the house to the carriage, I had observed that a small white rose had fallen from among the artificial flowers with which Sophia's bridal dress was profusely ornamented. This was picked up by a little boy, who, after having curiously inspected it, seemed uncertain to what use it might be turned.

"I suppose," said I to him, "you would as soon have half a crown as that flower?"

He eagerly assented to my offer, and the rose was consigned to my heart, where it has remained ever since.

Slowly and almost mechanically, I followed the crowd to the church. There, though anxious above all to attract no notice, I distinctly heard the solemn pledge earnestly and joyfully exchanged. I could witness no more, and hastily returned to my obscure lodgings.

Had I been told a year, or even a week before, that I could have remained a living and apparently unmoved spectator of what I that morning contemplated, I never would have believed it. But Royaumont was right. Human nature has powers of endurance of which it has itself no conception, until the hour of its utmost trial has passed. But there are sufferings which, while at the time they may be calmly and silently borne, can so thoroughly break down and destroy the vitality of the heart, that, though life itself is still prolonged for a space, scarcely a feeling or a token survives of our former existence.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Come weep with me,—past help, past cure, past hope.—ROMEO AND JULIET.

How the remainder of that day was spent I have never been able to remember. The hours, however, flew by; and at their appointed time, the papers of the ensuing morning fully announced to the fashionable world the events that I had myself witnessed. Had any confirmation been required, it was now furnished beyond the utmost power of doubt. Still I felt an unaccountable anxiety to be informed of every particular, so as to render impossible any return of the self-reproach which the generous appeal of Dolores had awakened within me. I therefore procured myself every newspaper of the day; and it was in one of these that I found, after a detailed account of the marriage ceremony, a paragraph to the following effect:—

"We rejoice the more at the splendid prospects thus opened, the youthful marquis, that circumstances have lately occur

elsewhere which might cast a shade over the hereditary lustre of his house, were not its dignity so nobly upheld by its principal representative. We trust that ere long the circumstances to which we thus allude will be so completely and satisfactorily elucidated as to render censure and warning equally unnecessary on our part. The younger members of our aristocracy would do well, however, to recollect that the more anxious we are, in accordance with the general feeling of this country, to uphold the dignity of their order, the more severely would we reflect upon the conduct of those who appear insensible to the duties their rank imposes upon them."

I perused these lines with a calmness which would have surprised me at any former period of my life, and they now merely reminded me that I certainly had yet one duty to perform. I therefore proceeded at once to the docks, and the money that I consented to receive from Dolores being nearly spent, I offered my services to the captain of a merchantman, who was then lading for Gibraltar. We arrived there in due course of time, after a very fair passage; and I could not but smile at the high eulogium passed by my captain, as I took leave of him, upon my proficiency as a seaman.

No sooner was I landed, than I inquired for the *Arethusa*, and was told that, after refitting, she had lately gone out to sea again. I thereupon ascertained who was the senior naval officer in the harbour, and having attired myself in the dress of my real station, I proceeded at once on board his ship. I succeeded in obtaining of him a moment's interview without giving my name, but this I unhesitatingly disclosed to him as soon as we were alone together, respectfully soliciting his advice at the critical juncture which I had now reached. He was evidently a good-natured, kind-hearted man, and appeared much moved even at that portion of my story which my feelings allowed me to impart.

"I have heard your case mentioned already," said he to me; "it is a very serious one indeed: appearances tell fearfully against you, and nothing could be more unfortunate than your recent flight. I must add, however, that from some details which I have accidentally heard respecting your former life, I was particularly unwilling, I may almost say unable, to credit anything very much to your disadvantage, even before I had seen you. Now, without pressing any questions upon you which I should at present have no right to urge, allow me to ask you merely, why, as you are anxious to abide by the issue of your trial, you did not, while in England, surrender yourself to the naval authorities there?"

"I was not aware, sir," answered I, "that that would have been a more proper course, and indeed, to speak truly, I was so overcome by grief at other occurrences, quite unconnected with my professional errors and prospects, that I believe my reason *would have given way* had I remained in England. As I had left *my ship* at Gibraltar, I almost instinctively returned here, but I *will now stay or not*, according to the kind advice I venture to *claim from you*."

The good-natured captain appeared himself perplexed how to act

in best accordance with his own duty, and his evident commiseration for me. He finally determined to detain me in close confinement on board his own ship, until he received the admiral's answer to a detailed report of the circumstances, which he would immediately forward to him. Having obtained leave to inquire after one person only in the town, I forwarded a message to the house of Dolores, informing her of my return. But alas! she had departed a few days before, and, it was generally believed, she had proceeded to the Havannah, where her uncle had obtained a high command.

Whatever may have been her destination, I have not since seen or heard of her, and doubtless her generous heart has scarcely conceived what was the result of the voyage to England which I undertook at her instigation.

Sad and gloomy, indeed, were the hours of solitude which ensued; but sadder and gloomier still my unavailing reflections upon the irrevocable past, and upon the hopeless future. Unceasingly I grieved over my blighted prospects, my forfeited honour, my broken sword: and whence could comfort or forgetfulness now come? I thought of the forsaken Dolores, of the rejected Lady Edward, of the martyred Bianca, of the sainted Mrs. Wentworth; I remembered how I could have loved, how I could have been loved; and shattered in spirits as in health, I would weep like a child over the ruined promise of my lonely and desolate youth.

Thus were my days passed—the weary, cheerless days; and yet how welcome, each in their mournful succession, after the helpless hours when all the terrors of night would beset and encompass me. What are those dark and fearful shades again closing upon me?

"Beg pardon, sir," said the marine on duty at my door, "but I must take away that light."

"Already?"

"Yes, sir. The bell has just gone, and the captain's orders were positively renewed this morning."

Again in that haunted yet lonesome darkness! Where has sleep fled, the heavenly nurse, the sainted comforter of my youth? I dare not close my eyes now, and yet how weak and weary they are with the tortures of these restless watchings! Oh! for one hour of my tranquil slumbers at Ashton!

* * * * *

Mrs. Wentworth! I thought you would come again and watch over my pillow. How long I have expected you! But why do you look so stern, and why is there no smile in your eyes? I love Mordaunt, and I love Thornton. But, oh! how far more do I love you. . . .

Mordaunt! Are you come too! So you have chosen the commutation! How pale he looks, but still how fearless! Oh, do not flog him for having given me that bullet. Merciful Heaven, how his blood flows! See, his head and his chest are covered with ghastly wounds. I knew you would kill him at last. But soft, he still speaks. "This is not Ashton, Rockingham"

Why are you on board this ship? A prisoner! Then you might have warned me. One word from you would have saved your schoolfellow, your first friend at Ashton, and fifty of your countrymen with him. Tell Mrs. Wentworth that it is she who has brought me to this favour, but NOT SHE ONLY."

How could I have warned him? My honour was pledged to Royaumont, my preserver. How beautiful is the smile which breaks upon his dark countenance as he gazes upon me! Can that be ENGLAND indeed? Then all my sorrows are forgotten. Farewell, Royaumont! We will meet again, and I shall not die until I have requited your kindness. I will go to Ashton first. What, no longer here? Then I will inquire in the village. My strength is exhausted, and I will rest first in the churchyard. Oh, no, not THERE!

Yet all are well at Elmswater. What will Sophia's welcome be? She recognises me now. "*Edward, my own Edward! I knew that you would come to me again. I shall be yours, yours only—but not yet.*"

Poor Royaumont! How I have wept for thee in the midst of my own happiness. We will meet again after the peace, and thou shalt smile as if Amélie had never forsaken thee, and never been torn from thy arms.

The peace! There is no peace here; for the soldiers of Murat are pressing hard upon our dismantled fortress. What, thou amongst them, Bianca! For Heaven's sake be more careful; those ruthless bullets spare no one. But thou art faint and weary; why come so fast and so far? Ay, put thy arm round my neck and I will support thee!

Oh, Heaven! her slender bodice is covered with blood! Speak to me once more!

"*Edward, I have loved you from the first hour that I beheld you. Why did you not detain me in the fort till the battle was over? But you have sacrificed me too to your northern cousin!*"

What, no peace yet? I loathe the sea now! Must we board that frigate? On, on, or we shall be driven back. *Edouard, quelle rencontre!* Oh, mercy, Richards, mercy! He is no enemy, but my friend, my saviour. I loved him as a brother, and now you have killed him too!

But Sophia will yet be mine; her heart was ever with me, even in the grave. Will she know me again now? Oh, what unearthly beauty.

She is coming, but not alone. What! forgotten! betrayed! All has been sacrificed for thee, Sophia!—and is this thy reward? I have seen the tears stand in the eyes of the rude seamen as they gazed upon me, and none in thine! Pause, for the blood of Royaumont and of Bianca is upon thy veil, and not theirs only. Ha! ha! ha! these are joyous nuptials indeed!

* * * * *

"*Beg pardon, sir,*" said the sentry, "*can I give any assistance?"*
"Did I call?"

"No, sir; but your sleep is so awful unquiet. Shall I not go for the surgeon?"

"No, thank you; I am often so, but am better now. Leave the door open a little, that I may see that light."

SueL was still my distracted state of mind, when one day a letter of rather an ancient date, and covered with post-marks, was delivered to me. It was from Lady Sheerness, and to the following effect:—

"My dear Edward,—It is with inexpressible gratification that I am enabled to announce to you, though as yet quite privately, that the marriage between your brother and Sophia Waldegrave is now definitively determined upon and settled. You well know how ardently this most desirable union has been wished for—how long it has been contemplated by every member and friend of the family. Could you, however, have heard, as I did, the solemn terms in which your poor father, with his dying breath, urged upon Elmswater and upon your cousin the necessity of not delaying it more than circumstances would absolutely require, you would still more regret that he should not have lived to witness this consummation of all his hopes. The ceremony may, I trust, take place very shortly in London, from which the very happy couple will, I believe, proceed at once to Elmswater Castle, which is now about to be thoroughly re-furnished and refitted under my superintendence. Elmswater and Sophia both desire their most affectionate love, and request me to say how deeply they trust that you will always consider their house, wheresoever it may be, as absolutely and entirely your own.

"They would both have written to you themselves, were it not for a particular circumstance to which I may as well allude, *en passant*, though it has doubtless dwelt more on my mind and on that of your brother than on Sophia's, or, I trust, on your own. When you were last in England, my dear Edward, you were, in fact, but a child, naturally following every impulse of your feelings, and incapable as yet of comprehending the peculiar and very critical circumstances in which the family was placed. You then acted and spoke as it became your age and inexperience. The vigilance of those who had more knowledge of the world than you could have acquired, your own good sense and most exemplary conduct, and, above all, Sophia's excellent judgment and admirable devotion to her true duties, have averted all the impediments which otherwise might have obstructed the natural and rightful course of events. You will, however, understand and approve me when I say that, all things considered, I have recommended that the foregoing intelligence should be conveyed to you by me alone. Pray let us all hear from you soon, my dear Edward, and believe me, your affectionate aunt,

"MARIA SHEERNES."

I read this letter attentively, and anxious above all things to write nothing in haste or unadvisedly, I did not attempt to answer

"When all was hope, when all was gladness there,
 Perchance thou saw'st one look of deep despair;
 Amidst the loud and oft-repeated cheer
 Did one fell sound of mourning reach thine ear;
 The death-cry of a wounded heart,
 When youth and love for ever part?
 Sigh not for that.

"'Tis but one heart which long and sorely bled
 Ere it was thus, so early, cold and dead.
 Weep not for me who ne'er will weep again,
 A stranger soon alike to joy and pain;
 Nor mourn o'er such a youth as mine,
 For life and living hearts are thine,
 But smile once more."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Let your fair eyes and gentle wishes go with me to my trial: wherein, if I be foiled, there is but one shamed that was never gracious; if killed, but one dead that is willing to be so. I shall do my friends no wrong, for I have none to lament me; the world no injury, for in it I have nothing; only in the world I fill up a place, which may be better supplied when I have made it empty.—*As You Like It*.

ABOUT a month after my return to Gibraltar, I was informed that the official answer of the admiral had been received, recommending that a court-martial should be held upon me so soon as the *Arethusa*, whose return might be hourly expected, should have arrived. After a very short delay, my ship entered the harbour, in company with two others; and on that very day a scrap of paper was thrust into my cabin, which contained, in an unknown hand, the following advice:—

"Take no advocate or lawyer, but prepare carefully your defence. M'Ross will attempt to substantiate two charges; one of cowardice before the enemy, the other of mutiny. You can easily repel both. As for the blow you struck him, you must throw yourself upon the mercy of the Court, merely stating fully the circumstances under which the incident occurred."

However grateful I felt to my unknown adviser, I had long since determined upon the course to pursue when the eventful day should arrive. It came at last. The court-martial was to take place in the very vessel where I had lately been detained, and was to be presided over by her captain; so that it was in his cabin that the questions so deeply affecting my fate and my honour were to be decided.

When I was ushered there, I found that the requisite number of officers was already assembled, with the exception of one, whose seat, at the right hand of the president, was as yet unoccupied. A stool was placed for me opposite the table round which the Court sat, and very near the chair that had been prepared for M'Ross. After a short delay, the proceedings were opened by an observation from the captain presiding, who stated that, having himself, from singular concurrence, of circumstances never before assisted a court-martial, he would be happy to receive the suggestions

any member, having more experience than himself, might think proper to make as to the conduct of the trial. Captain M'Ross was then told that within five minutes he had better commence stating his case. Ere these had elapsed, however, the expected officer entered, apologizing respectfully to the president and to the Court for the delay which had been caused by circumstances over which he had no control.

I had as yet been an unmoved and indifferent spectator of what was going on around me, but the appearance of this officer startled me so violently, that I remained actually breathless as I gazed upon him. It seemed as if Thornton himself was before me; not as I had known him in the playground of Ashton—not as I had met him on the fatal shore of Teneriffe—but such as he would have been in the pride of his full-grown manhood, had his life been spared. His form, his look, his features, his voice,—all were there; fully matured now by age, by constant exercise of the body, and by continual application of the mind. The more I contemplated him, the more all my senses were bewildered and confused. Does the grave, indeed, muttered I, restore her dead to life? Has nature, for once, in a sportive mood, cast two mortal beings in one single mould? or rather, have not my distracted thoughts, which have lately been wandering so often back to the scenes of my childhood, conjured up the fantastic image of my long-lost schoolboy friend? This latter conclusion, strange as it might have appeared to me in moments of less excitement, was somewhat confirmed when the commander, whose appearance had so forcibly arrested my attention, fixed upon me one look, in which not the slightest symptom of recognition could be detected, and then seemed to resign his whole thoughts to the proceedings which were commencing.

M'Ross entered very elaborately into his statement of the charges; and though amazed, beyond all powers of expression, at the apparition I had just witnessed, I was soon recalled by the speech of my vindictive captain to a subject more deeply affecting me. I had expected that he would not fail to present his case in such a manner as to place my conduct in a very unfavourable light; but I was not prepared for the remarkable subtleness and ability with which, by a slight but constant perversion of the truth, he succeeded in arraying against me a very appalling amount of facts, inferences, and testimonies, greatly to my disadvantage. The knowledge he had acquired of every circumstance of my life, not only during my stay on board this ship, but for many years before, was perfectly astounding; and the whole chain of his inculpations was linked together and exposed with an art which would have done credit to the most renowned special pleader.

He began by expressing the extreme reluctance and deep regret he had felt on calling for a court-martial in the present case. Serious as the charges were, he would, as far as he was personally concerned, have gladly overlooked every circumstance connected with them, had he conceived it to be consistent with his duty and with the welfare of the service to suffer them to remain unnoticed.

A practice, however, had unfortunately grown up among many distinguished families, of obtruding into the naval profession those members whose absence from England and from home was considered derirable, or whose unfitness to reside there had been manifested. Such, he had every reason to believe, was the case with me; and he thought it but fair to me to state his impression upon this point, that the Court might be induced to show some indulgence for my gross and criminal misconduct in a service which I had not entered in consequence of any natural wish or aptitude.

From one circumstance or another, continued M'Ross, I had from the first been peculiarly unfortunate. At the affair off Teneriffe, I had retired so far from the scene of action, that though all prisoners were exchanged, and full notice given on that point, I alone remained on the island. I was subsequently for three whole years embarked in a French frigate, and to all appearance engaged in the service of the Republic. Having at length determined to return to England, I had, through the interest of my family, been appointed to one of the vessels which were to sail against Copenhagen; but this description of service being, no doubt, not very congenial to my taste, I managed again to miss my ship. These circumstances, and some others to which he would not allude, had rendered him very unwilling to receive me on board the *Arethusa*, from the apprehension that his own strict habits and notions of discipline would probably lead to some serious differences between us; and so the event had proved.

M'Ross here enlarged at some length, and with remarkable subtlety, on my presumed efforts to ingratiate myself with the crew, by exciting among them every sentiment of insubordination and disrespect towards him. Upon this charge, his perversion and misconstruction of facts were most unscrupulous, but they were certainly successful in throwing a very unfavourable construction upon that portion of my conduct which was less than any other deserving of censure. As to my bearing in action, he had had, he said, but two occasions of testing it, and in both the credit of the service had been seriously impaired.

The circumstance of the white flag hoisted at Pianosa, and the failure of my attack upon Royaumont's frigate, were much dwelt on and commented upon, in corroboration of this statement. Finally, a very detailed and distorted account of our last difference concluded the long series of his criminations, which my recent attempted evasion from justice certainly did not tend to disprove.

The testimonies produced by M'Ross in support of his charges, were principally those of the marines. These fully confirmed his statements as to my continued efforts to win the affections of the crew, and as to the unfortunate fact that I had so far forgotten myself as to strike him when in the execution of his duty. That the white flag had been seen floating over our little citadel of *Pianosa*, was also indisputably proved; but though two marines attempted to attribute the failure of our last attack upon the French frigate to a want of sufficient presence of mind on my part

the most critical juncture, this portion of the case was the most imperfectly substantiated.

Upon the whole, however, Mr. Ross's speech evidently produced a deep impression upon all present, and would have very much perplexed and discouraged me, had not my mind been long since made up not to attempt any defence, and to court rather than to deprecate the utmost rigour of the sentence.

When the case for the prosecution was completely closed, the president turned to me, and calling particularly my attention to the very serious nature of the charges preferred against me, urged me carefully and unreservedly to state everything which might tend to vindicate my conduct and my character.

"I have nothing to say," replied I; "I am willing to abide cheerfully and respectfully by the decision of the Court."

This unexpected answer created the greatest surprise amongst all the officers present, and after exchanging a few significant looks with them, the president again addressed me, asking if I pleaded guilty to all the charges.

"Most decidedly not," answered I, "except upon one single point, but upon that alone my life is forfeited to the laws of my country, and that forfeit I am both ready and willing to pay. I see, therefore, no cause why I should trespass on the time and attention of the Court regarding matters in which I alone could be concerned, and to which I am myself grown indifferent."

A fresh pause here ensued, after which, evidently to satisfy the general sentiment, the president renewed his appeal to me.

"The point to which you allude is, I presume, the blow which you were so unfortunate as to strike Captain M'Ross; but the other charges affect still more deeply, perhaps, your honour; and surely, for the sake of your friends and of your family, you will at least make some attempt to repel such accusations?"

"I have no friends left in this world," answered I; "all who could have borne that name have been torn from me in circumstances the most heart-rending. As to my family, they have little concern in my welfare and prospects, and whatever misfortunes may overwhelm me, will fall lightly upon them. I can only repeat what I before said, that I am willing to abide entirely by the judgment of the Court."

I could not but observe during the former proceedings that no one present had evinced so deep an interest in them as the captain who had last entered. More than once he had addressed himself in a whisper to the president, at whose right hand he sat, apparently suggesting to him some question which he thought it desirable the Court should address either to M'Ross or to his witnesses, and I had also remarked that these questions were almost invariably such as were most likely to produce an answer favourable to the accusation and more deeply criminating me. This officer now again exchanged a few words in a whisper with the president, and, with the assent of the latter, himself addressed me in a stern and commanding tone.

"I am expressing, I believe," said he, "the opinion of the wh

Court, when I urge you to consider very seriously the consequences of your present line of conduct. We cannot believe that you should be totally indifferent both to the honour of your name and to the high reputation which until latterly you have borne in his majesty's service. Should it unfortunately be so, however, you would do well to remember that you owe it to this Court and to the interest they so clearly manifest in your most unfortunate situation, to give them every information which can enable them fully and competently to discharge their painful duty. I trust, therefore, you have still something to add."

The magic influence of that voice was irresistible, though its every tone bewildered and perplexed me more and more. I arose, as if by an impulse not proceeding from my own will, and after a strong effort to collect my senses and to master my faltering voice, said:—

"I should be very sorry that the Court should think me indifferent to the kind interest and sympathy which they have shown me. I had hoped, indeed, that the confidence I had manifested in their free judgment, unbiassed by any reflections on my part, might be considered by them as the strongest testimony I could afford of my respect and my regard. I am now told that some statement from me might tend to facilitate to them the execution of their duty; but what can I say? Upon the most important point, and the only one, as I conceive, which has been in any way substantiated, I plead utterly and completely guilty. As to the two other charges, they have been, as it appears to me, so very weakly and poorly supported, that they must, I should think, stand before the Court, or before any reasonable and impartial man, merely as the assertions of a party whom I may designate, without any injustice to him, as my personal enemy. Poor and short as my services have been, I think that well may they weigh in the balance against such vague and loose affirmations as these, and not be found wanting; and when the sentence I expect—and the justice of which I recognise beforehand—is carried out, I rejoice to think that, on my bare breast, four distinct wounds will be seen, scarcely one of which could have been received elsewhere than in the van and very front of the conflict. These will speak for me when I am no more. These will answer the wretched calumnies that you have this day heard, which are as unworthy of my notice as of your attention. And not these mute witnesses only; for what testimonies could not I bring before this Court if I were merely to challenge, indiscriminately, the opinion of every British seaman who has fought and bled by my side? But why should I attempt either defence or recrimination? Why should I trust my cause before you to any artifice of language rather than to its own poor merits? An accumulation of misfortunes has absolutely borne me down. As I thus attempt to address this Court, as I gaze upon the officer who but now spoke to me, I feel uncertain whether I am still in the possession of my reason, or whether my distracted mind, having already given way, not conjuring before me images arising from beyond the grave, solemnly assure the Court, that I am not in a condition to be a

guide or a safe party to any decision they may this day come to; and if they wish to show any indulgence or forbearance towards me, they will best consult my interest by allowing me to remain silent."

The impression produced by these incoherent observations, and still more, I suppose, by my bewildered looks and strangely-excited manner, was evidently very painful, and such as to impart very serious misgivings as to my state of mind. The Court, however, was preparing to withdraw, without any further observation, when the captain on the right of the president, appearing to recall a circumstance which he had lately forgotten, searched in his pocket, and said:—

"I think it my duty to the Court to mention that this letter was delivered to me in the course of the morning. It is written by a boatswain in the service, by name Richards, whom I have long known, and who, as he states, has it in his power to communicate some very valuable information in the present case. I leave it to the Court to decide whether, owing to the peculiar circumstances in which we are placed, it would not be desirable that this man should be heard."

"He is not a witness called by either of the parties," observed the president, doubtingly.

"No, sir," replied the officer who had just spoken; "but I suppose that Lord Edward Rockingham has no objection that this Richards should be summoned on his part?"

I inclined my head in token of assent, and soon afterwards Richards was introduced.

"You have written to the captain of the *St. Andrew*," said the president, "that you have information to communicate upon this case. Proceed at once to say what it is."

The firmness of Richard, appeared, as is usual with men of his class, to give way not a little in the presence of so many persons who were his superiors in rank and education. It was, therefore, not without considerable embarrassment and confusion that he stated, in his own name and on the part of many of his shipmates, his desire that the Court should be made aware how very much I was esteemed and looked up to, by all who were acquainted with me, for my courage and my capacity.

"Have you known Lord Edward long?" asked the president.

"Ever since he first went to sea."

"Have you been in action with him?"

"Often, sir."

"Have you ever remarked on his part any sign of weakness in the presence of the enemy?"

"Weakness from him!" exclaimed Richards, whose self-possession was now fast returning. "I have been now in his majesty's service—man and boy—for more than fifteen years, and I can solemnly declare, that whether he be an Englishman or a foreigner, whether he be an officer or one of us, I have never seen a man—*saving Lord Nelson only*—bear himself in action as he does."

"It is scarcely necessary, after this eulogium," interposed

M'Ross, "to state to the Court, that this person is a sort of retainer of the Rockingham family."

"Captain M'Ross," said Richards, looking him very stedfastly in the face, "I have obtained my discharge from your ship that I might freely give my evidence here to-day; and I now say—not for you, who already know it, but for this Court—that I am not and have never been a retainer in his lordship's family; though I might well be proud of the title, honoured and respected as they are by all. One of my relations was at sea with his lordship's uncle, but that circumstance would never have induced me to speak more than the truth in this or in any other matter. If, however, I am to be considered partial, I will say this, that I can bring here, should the Court desire it, twenty—fifty—a hundred British sailors, who will fully bear out all that I may state. I do not allude to one or two marines, who think it perhaps their duty to repeat what you affirm; but there is not one seaman of the *Arethusa*—not one—who will contradict me when I say, that no officer in his majesty's service, for his years, stands higher with the men than Lord Edward!"

Striking as were the manly firmness and warmth with which these words were uttered by Richards, and the effect they produced upon M'Ross, my attention was still more arrested by the change which had now come over the countenance of the captain of the *St. Andrew*. Never had I seen before every nobler feeling that can swell the human breast glow thus in the eye of man, and the look that he would occasionally cast at my traducer was absolutely withering.

Whether from his former connection with Richards, or from the natural superiority of his mind, he now insensibly took the lead in the proceedings, evidently suggesting almost every question which was put by the president, and more than once addressing the witness himself.

My former services, my whole conduct on board the *Arethusa*, every detail of the Siege of Pianosa, and of the attack on Royau-mont's frigate, were fully entered into and discussed by Richards. Where did the rude seaman learn that eloquence—so simple and so artless, and yet as truly touching and commanding as any that has ever swayed the decisions of a senate? Could the greatest luminary of the English bar have presented, in more truly striking terms, my youthful zeal for the service, my constancy, my unre-mitting toil, my fearless exposure to every peril, and the boundless confidence with which, at each more critical hour, every man had followed me wherever I led? As Richards spoke, the long-extin-guished fire of former days was again kindled within me; and, aroused from the state of listless and utter prostration into which I had latterly fallen, I felt as if again able to defend and to vindicate before men that which had so long been far dearer to me than life.

All was now satisfactorily elucidated, saving the fatal incident of the blow I had struck M'Ross; but here no studied orator could more effectually have served my cause than the faithful boatsw

when he described the extraordinary state of agitation in which some fatal news had plunged me on the foregoing day. He dwelt upon the previous agony of my mind; how, during the long night, I had not ceased to pace my cabin in silent and hopeless despair, and how my grief had been worked up to frenzy, when I had beheld prostrate at my feet—and struck down apparently with my own hand—one to whom I was indebted for my life, and for numerous acts of unspeakable kindness. Such was the state of my feelings, aggravated by the pain of three different wounds, when he himself, as Richards continued to state, had, against the express orders of the surgeon, requested me to come upon deck to assist in averting a serious catastrophe: I had appeared—I had offered, in the most respectful terms, my services to the captain;—what was his acknowledgment? The greatest insult to which any officer could be exposed!

M'Ross here attempted to contradict the assertion of Richards.

"I heard it myself," exclaimed the honest seaman, his very voice glowing with the sentiments which were burning within him. "I heard it myself, and with mine own ears, and I would swear to it, Captain M'Ross, were we both standing before our Maker. I heard it, and not I only, though it was spoken low enough—two others heard it with me, who will swear to it as I do. It was then, and for that, that he struck you; and whatever the Court may say, there is not a man of us on board who thinks he was wrong."

A sharp observation from the president here interrupted my warm-hearted advocate; but he immediately continued:—

"He a disgrace to the service!—there was not one of us who did not feel that we were insulted by the words. For what are we, who knew no other pride or no other duty than to follow him—if he was not everything that is honourable and noble? I do wish that the Court, if they think me partial, would but call some of my shipmates. They are all here, all ready, all anxious to come, and to speak for him as they would die for him. And not the Arethusa's only. There is men in this harbour from the Culloden who can say, as well as I, how Lord Nelson smiled upon him when they boarded together the San Joseph; and there is men from the Undaunted can say the character he bore there; and there are Frenchmen also from the last frigate who can tell why their commander loved him so, and who will recognise him when they see him, as the officer who came down upon them more like an angel of death, as one said to me, than like a mortal man. And after all, that it should have come to this!" Here, overpowered by his excited feelings, the honest seaman burst into a flood of tears.

The president recommended Richards to pause for a few moments, and inquired of the Court whether they thought it expedient that any of the witnesses alluded to by the faithful boatswain should be heard? The low murmur of dissent which arose, seemed to mark that their opinions were already formed. M'Ross then endeavoured, in a few disconnected sentences, to modify the adverse impression of the Court; but so unsuccessful was his attempt,

he soon himself relinquished it, and I was, in my turn, asked if I had now any fresh observations to make, after what had fallen from Richards.

By the look which the captain of the St. Andrew cast upon me, I saw that it was desirable that I should say a few words, and I therefore again attempted to address the Court.

"I feel," resumed I, "that it would be ungrateful on my part if I did not here publicly acknowledge the terms in which my honest and faithful friend has spoken of me. I am too proud of his esteem and regard, in any way to disown them; yet, while I freely admit that he may not be entirely impartial in this matter, I trust that I might appeal, as confidently as he has done, to the testimony of all my other shipmates. Gentlemen, is such additional testimony now needed? Even had his been required to repel assertions made, as I firmly believe, less with the hope that they could be substantiated, than with a well-founded expectation that however completely disproved, they must still irreparably injure me; if, I say, to repel these, his testimony was required, how triumphant has been the vindication! Were it possible that a doubt should still exist in any of your minds, I would ask this simple question: can one, who is not considered unworthy to lead such men as he, be undeserving of your esteem and confidence? Richards has spoken truly indeed, when he said, that no one has ever entered the king's service with a more zealous and ardent desire and will than I have always felt, to discharge creditably all my duties; and saving on that one single occasion with respect to which I have freely acknowledged my guilt, I solemnly declare, that I have never failed in accomplishing them to the best of my ability. Upon that point, I again repeat, that I shall regard the utmost severity of your sentence as not unmerited.

"No one can be impressed more deeply than I am, with the essential and paramount importance of maintaining the strictest discipline in this branch of his majesty's service; and whatever may have been the peculiar circumstance which might extenuate my misconduct—and these have been very imperfectly stated, as they are but very partially known by Richards himself,—they are not, as I conceive, sufficient to exculpate me in your eyes. If, however, you should consider that my former zeal for the king's service, and the many occasions on which it has been my pride and my good fortune to shed my blood in my country's cause, entitle me to some slight indulgence on your part, I would humbly beg leave to submit to you one single reflection. Perhaps you may be induced to think that, in the desperate warfare upon which England is again engaged, some opportunity might offer in which a person so utterly weary of life as I am—for motives entirely unconnected with this trial,—and so anxious as I am to lay down as speedily as may be consistent with honour, a burthen too heavy for him to bear, might have it in his power yet to do some slight service; should you for this reason, and for this only, feel disposed not at once to visit my offence with the extremest rigour, I will solemnly enter here into this pledge:—that I will unceasingly solicit."

favour of being employed on each most perilous enterprise and undertaking which may be attempted or contemplated ; and that I will unremittingly seek out myself the death I have deserved, wherever it may be found, until this my pledge shall have been redeemed."

I sat down, and the Court had already risen to retire, when the captain of the St. Andrew, with the president's assent, thus addressed me :—

"From the evidence that we have heard, it would appear that you have been labouring under some severe private affliction which has very violently excited your feelings, and has contributed to urge you on to the two most unfortunate acts you have committed—your misconduct towards your superior officer, and your escape from your ship when under arrest. Are you at liberty confidentially to state anything connected with this subject?"

"All allusion to it is impossible," answered I, in so decided a tone as to prevent any further inquiry.

The Court withdrew, and within half an hour I was informed of the result of their deliberations. The charge of having struck my superior officer when on duty, was pronounced to have been fully substantiated, and sentence of death was accordingly passed upon me. On every other point, the statements of M^r Ross were declared to be frivolous, vexatious, and completely unfounded.

Bowing respectfully to this decision, I inquired when the sentence was to be put into execution.

"Not until the orders have been received from England," was the president's only reply ; and I was withdrawn.

CHAPTER XXXV.

Eros, unarm, the long day's task is done,
And we must sleep.—ANTHONY AND CLEOPATRA.

ALL the vessels in harbour being under orders to put to sea that evening, I was conducted, not to the cabin I had lately occupied, —but to a small room which had been prepared for me in one of the barracks on shore. As I was proceeding there in a boat, we passed very near the Arethusa. Though I did not look up, I was recognised by the men. In an instant the chains and shrouds were lined with them ; and three loud cheers assured me that I still dwelt in the memory of my shipmates.

In the evening, a small note was cast into my prison-room, through the open window. It was in the same hand as the one I had received previously to my trial, and was as follows :—

"There can be little or no doubt that the sentence of the Court will be very materially modified, though it has been considered desirable that the ships should sail under a different impression. *Rest assured that no efforts will be spared to save—not your life, which is really not in danger, but your honour and your rank. I write upon the highest and best authority here.*"

This second friendly notice, coinciding with the singular bearing of the captain of the *St. Andrew* during the latter part of the trial, and with his extraordinary resemblance to Thornton, contributed still more to perplex my already confused recollections. In vain I endeavoured to remember if I had ever before seen that handwriting. It bore no affinity to that of my lost friend, whose letters I had carefully preserved; and it was impossible for me, even after the longest and most minute investigation, in any way to recognise it. The subject, however, was soon dismissed from my thoughts.

Though kept closely confined in my new prison, I was treated with as much attention and care as I could possibly expect. It was there, during the long and lonely hours of my solitude, that these pages were principally traced, feebly recalling the happy hours when the deceptive promise of life was as yet so brilliant, and recording the subsequent sorrows which, as I fully believe, have broken my heart.

Week after week now elapsed, and I received no intelligence respecting the decision of the Admiralty upon my case. The only letter delivered to me was one from my brother, of an old date, which had followed me to England after my escape, and which had been returned from thence. It ran thus:—

“My dear Edward,—I write these few lines in all haste, to request that you will immediately inform me of all the particulars respecting your present difficulties. I need not assure you that I do not attach the slightest belief to the statements which have unfortunately reached the Admiralty upon this matter. But as it is essential to the honour of your family, as much as to your own, that the whole should be most satisfactorily cleared up, I trust that you will not fail confidentially to give me every information which may best enable me to assist in re-establishing your good reputation.

“We all unite in best love.

“Your affectionate Brother,

“ARLINGTON.”

I immediately answered as follows:—

“My dear Elmswater,—“Your letter from London has only reached me this day. I am much obliged to you for the concern you show with respect to the misfortunes which have lately befallen me; but nothing has occurred to render necessary any confidential communication between myself and you, or any third party. Ere you receive this, you will doubtless have been made fully aware, either through the Admiralty or by the public papers, of all the circumstances connected with my recent court-martial. Should your opinion coincide with that of the Court, you will find that my honour and that of the family have always been, as I trust they ever will be, as safe in my keeping as you could possibly desire.

“Believe me, yours very truly,

“EDWARD ROCKINGHAM.”

I soon recovered from the irritation which my brother's letter had excited within me, and I had brought up the narrative of my life to the very period at which I was writing, when one morning I was informed that a naval officer wished to see me. I desired him to be immediately admitted; and the post-captain whose appearance had struck me so much during my trial, entered the room, exclaiming, in a joyful voice:

"My dear Rockingham, how happy I am again to see you!"

"Who are you?" cried I, starting back. "Your voice, your look—all remind me of one who is long since no more; and yet I should think that you were he—were it possible that he could still exist."

"Well, I don't know to whom you can allude; but if you are speaking of your old schoolboy friend, Thornton, it is he whose hand you are now holding."

"Can it be so, indeed!" exclaimed I, throwing myself into his arms. "Then it was not you, after all, who expired almost in my arms at Teneriffe—whom I followed to the grave, and over whom I erected that humble memorial of my undying friendship?"

"Indeed it was not," answered Thornton. "I was severely wounded at Santa Cruz; but if I was buried there it must have been by proxy. We can return presently to this matter, which certainly appears very singular. In the mean time I must tell you that my efforts in your favour have been tolerably fortunate. Of course you received my two notes, which I did not write in my own hand, or sign, to avoid all appearance of having been in communication with you. I have been more successful than I had anticipated. You will be reprimanded, and put at the bottom of the list of lieutenants—for the sake of example, but nothing more. As to your character, you may rest assured that it stands as high as ever in the fleet and at the Admiralty."

"Could anything make me happy again, Thornton," answered I, "it would be to receive that assurance, and to receive it from yourself. Now pray let me know to what extent I am indebted to your exertions for this unexpectedly favourable issue?"

"I need not say that I have done my best, Edward; but circumstances came wonderfully to my assistance. On the very evening after the court-martial, I succeeded in obtaining leave to repair to England, so as to follow up the business myself at the Admiralty. I was so fortunate, on my way, as to fall in with Lord Nelson as he was returning from the West Indies, still in search of the enemy's fleet. I stated all the particulars to him, and, with his usual kind-heartedness, he gave me his utmost assistance in obtaining for your case the most favourable consideration. In a very few days you will be officially informed of what I am now communicating to you. We will then, if you approve, put to sea together in my ship, to which you have been appointed, under the auspices of the hero, who is sincerely attached to you and to your family; and you will soon recover the ground you have lost—
thanks to the malignity of that scoundrel M'Ross.
I shook my head mournfully, and merely answered:

"Thornton, you remember my pledge; it shall be kept."

"Nonsense," replied he, "all this confinement and annoyance have dashed your spirits a little, but you will soon recruit them. By the bye, here are letters from your brother and sister-in-law. What a beautiful creature she is; there is nothing like her in all England! But, if there is no indiscretion in the inquiry, are not you and Lord Arlingford on good terms?"

"No, Thornton, not on the warmest; but how did you perceive that?"

"Oh, it was only a misgiving on my part. I fancied he was not quite so zealous in this matter as he might have been, as soon as he felt sure that your life was safe. As to your sister-in-law, nothing could exceed her kindness and anxiety about you. But let us talk of other matters now: pray tell me how you came to think that you had buried me at Teneriffe?"

I explained to him fully all the circumstances under which that conviction had been established in my mind. He most attentively listened to my narrative, and then said:

"It is all easily accounted for now. I perfectly remember falling into a sort of trance or fainting-fit, while you were sitting by my side, after you had rescued me from the hands of the enemy. I was aroused from this state by the entrance of several of our men, who informed me that all the prisoners were exchanged, and proceeded to remove me to my ship. I desired them to search and inquire for you, but as the shutters were closed in the room, you, I suppose, escaped their notice on the distant couch where you had been carried, and we finally concluded that you had already gone on board."

"But, Thornton, whose can have been that lieutenant's coffin, which I found standing and already closed by the side of your couch, when I was myself aroused?"

"I cannot say, indeed, Edward, excepting it were poor Wetherhead's, who, I know, was killed and buried in the island."

"The affair is really almost inconceivable," exclaimed I; "and the more so, that, when I met your brother, we spoke of your loss in terms of mutual condolence."

"That is very singular! but let me see—did you mention my Christian name?"

"Perhaps not."

"Then he must have thought you were speaking of another brother we lost about the time you were alluding to, and who was only a year younger than me. Still, the whole matter is most strange. I wonder, too, that the navy list did not let you sooner into the secret. There are three other Thorntons in it, to be sure, though none quite of my standing. But I must not forget to say, that my elder brother is now at Gibraltar, where he is come out for change of air, and that he will be most happy to see you. So soon as you can leave this infernal place, you must come and put up in his house on shore."

For more than an hour I conversed with Thornton, and when retired, I proceeded to read the two letters he had brought

The first was from my brother, complimenting me in distant and studied terms upon the more favourable turn which matters had taken, and to which he had, as he said, contributed to his utmost.

The second was from Sophia, and how my hand still trembled as I gazed upon the well-known writing, ere I could summon courage to break the seal. At length, my anxiety to learn the contents prevailed : I opened the small note, and read as follows :—

“My dear Edward,

“You are yourself so poor a correspondent, that you will have forgiven me, I hope, for not having written oftener to you lately. No words could express with what anxiety I have followed up everything connected with your late difficulties, and how truly happy and delighted I am to hear that all is now settled as satisfactorily as could be hoped for. I will say no more, as I trust that before very long we may now be enabled to meet.

“God bless you and protect you, my dear Edward:

“Your affectionate Cousin and Sister,

“SOPHIA ARLINGFORD.”

“Sister ! Sophia Arlingford !” exclaimed I ; “accursed is everything that comes from thee : even thy very name, and seal, and signature, remind me of thy heartless treachery.”

I cast the letter upon the ground and stamped upon it in the renewed anguish of my despair. I then grasped a pen, and would have replied at once, pouring forth the indignant feelings which swelled my heart, but reason and reflection resumed their sway.

“I must write but once more,” muttered I ; “the only fit answer must come from THE GRAVE !”

END OF THE MEMOIR.

CONCLUSION.

Captain Thornton to Sir William Thornton.

London, February 12th, 1806.

“My dear William,—Your solicitor has just called upon me to inform me, that he is on the point of starting for Ireland to join you, and that he has been desired by you to obtain all particulars with respect to the death of our lamented friend Edward Rockingham. From all I hear, I fear very much that there is little prospect of our meeting during my short stay in England this time. The *St. Andrew* is under orders to sail immediately for the *West Indies*, and within a week I must again be afloat. I will, therefore, employ this wet morning in writing you a long letter upon a subject which I know must deeply interest you.

“I had hoped, as you will remember, that when Edward should gain be at sea with me, he would gradually recover from the deep *loom* which all our efforts, while he was staying with you

Gibraltar, were unsuccessful in dispelling. I was disappointed, however. He attended to his duty with great care and evident anxiety to give satisfaction to me and to all on board; but nothing could overcome the utter and hopeless despondency which his words, his look, and his manner, at all times revealed; and if I endeavoured to recall him to a more cheerful state of mind, his only answer was, 'Could I be happy again, Thornton, it would be here, and with you; but that is no longer possible now.'

"When Lord Nelson joined the fleet, I lost no time in going on board his ship with our friend. The admiral received him most kindly, and guessing, with his usual penetration and warm-heartedness, how necessary it was to administer consolation to Edward's wounded spirit, he spoke to him of his past services and of his future prospects and duties in terms which would have gratified many a post-captain; but it was of no avail. Nothing could evince greater or more respectful gratitude than Rockingham's answers; but when again on board the *St. Andrew*, he appeared even more dejected than before.

"Every hour now brought us some fresh indication that a great and decisive battle was at hand. All was excitement on board and throughout the fleet; Rockingham's manner alone remained entirely unaltered. If occasionally I alluded with him to the forthcoming engagement, I could trace one feeling only in the few words that he would utter—not a presentiment, but as it were a pre-conceived certainty that the first day of action would be the last of his life.

"The memorable 21st of October came, and I saw no change in the demeanour of our friend until we were in full view of the enemy's fleet. He then approached me, as we were clearing for action, and seizing my hand for a moment he said, in a tone and manner which I can never forget: "God bless and preserve you, my dear Thornton. Would that we had met again a year sooner, but, as you truly said to me at Ashton, I was born under an evil star. When all is over to-day, you will find a small packet from me in your cabin: I feel that I need not recommend to you my last wishes." 'Rockingham,' answered I, in the sternest voice that I could command, 'I need not remind you, I hope, that your life belongs to your country, and that nothing must be undertaken by you to-day without my special order.' 'Of course, certainly not,' said he in a hurried voice; and I was called away from him.

"As you may have seen, my dear William, by the official accounts, my ship was within two of Collingwood's, and we were thus very soon engaged in the thickest of the fight. At one moment, the odds against us were very great, the enemy fired uncommonly well, and by about two o'clock, the *St. Andrew* was a shocking wreck. Great as was the excitement of the hour, I did not forget to keep a watchful eye over Rockingham, and, to prevent his doing anything desperate, I endeavoured to detain him constantly by my side. He was there struck once by a splinter in the forehead; I ordered him down immediately to the surgeon, but within ten minutes, he was again standing by me.

"The battle was now drawing to a close, and I had great h-

that we might be spared any further loss of life, when my first-lieutenant called my attention more particularly to the critical position in which we were placed. One of the enemy's ships, which had not struck, and whose rigging was all in flames, had fallen foul of us, and her stern was actually locked right amid-ship into the *St. Andrew*; our own rigging was shattered and torn away in every direction, and our maintop-mast having fallen over, was resting upon the mizen-top of the enemy, from which the flames could thus, at any time, spread over us. I immediately directed that some men should be sent up to detach the topmast entirely: but the first-lieutenant soon afterwards returned and pointed out to me that this operation had become almost impossible. Our starboard main-shrouds, our stays and every support of the mainmast, with the exception of a few of the larboard shrouds, had been carried away, and the mast itself was so dreadfully shattered, a few feet above the deck, that it could hardly be expected to hold together for many minutes more, and would certainly part the moment a breeze arose. The midshipman had consequently, ordered all the men down from the maintop, and desired the mast to be watched, that its fall might cause the least possible loss of life. My first-lieutenant therefore expressed his opinion, that however desirable it might be at once to cut away the maintop-mast, it would be useless to expose any of our brave fellows to certain death in attempting to do it. Rockingham was standing close to us while these observations were exchanged: but I did not at the time believe that he had overheard them. My attention was for a moment withdrawn to another quarter; but when I again looked in the same direction, I beheld a man, whom I could easily recognise, swiftly ascending the tattered remnants of our larboard shrouds. He was soon in the maintop, then on the main-cap, from whence he proceeded with his cutlass to sever away the broken topmast, which now scarcely adhered to the ship, and was all in flames.

"I have given the following details, my dear William, because you are sailor enough to understand, on perusing them, the imminent peril into which Edward had rushed. This was increased when the enemy, in their natural anxiety to avoid the unwelcome present that we were desirous of bestowing upon them, directed towards him the attention of two of their best sharpshooters. I think he was struck once, for I could observe that he transferred his cutlass from his right hand to his left; but he succeeded in entirely disentangling the shattered topmast from its fittings; and when soon afterwards we parted slightly from the foe, all that was above our main-cap was torn away from us and remained with them. Edward now descended again to the maintop, but apparently arrested by the splendour of the view which was opening before him from thence, now that the breeze was beginning to clear away the smoke in which we had as yet been enveloped, he still lingered on in his perilous position.

"In the mean time the mainmast had been again struck, and groaning deeply at each breath of the freshening gale, the *hug*

pile quivered and shook like a broken reed. Sorely perplexed how I might best consult Rockingham's safety, I determined to order him down with my speaking-trumpet, in the hopes that he might still reach the deck before the forthcoming accident occurred. He immediately obeyed my injunction; but no sooner was his foot again upon the shrouds, than his slight weight, now sufficient to precipitate the dreaded catastrophe, caused the tottering mast irretrievably to incline to the side on which he was clinging.

"I could discern Rockingham for a moment more, as fully aware of his awful situation, he waved to me, with his cap in his hand, his last and triumphant farewell; and then, with one terrific crash, the gigantic spar fell overboard and was dashed into the waves below. More than twenty men, who had watched with breathless anxiety the impending fall, now sprang into the water, and succeeded in rescuing their ill-fated shipmate. He was brought again on deck, but alas, in what a condition! Several bones were broken, his whole body was fearfully bruised, burnt, and maimed, and he was perfectly insensible.

"In this state he remained until we arrived at Gibraltar. There every care was bestowed upon him, but alas! he was now far beyond the reach of all human skill. For a few hours only he recovered his whole consciousness: 'Thornton,' he then said to me, 'I do not speak of myself or of you; you will find plenty about that in the packet which I have left you. Of course it is for you alone and your brother, from whom I can have no secrets. I have still a letter to write. Pray give me your assistance that I may finish it, if possible, while I have strength left to hold a pen, for I am sinking fast.' He then wrote as follows:—

"'This letter will be delivered to you, I trust, by my faithful friend Captain Thornton, but for the account that he will bring respecting me, you will have been well prepared, no doubt, by the published reports of the Admiralty upon the late action.

"'Sophia, do you still remember the evening when you arrested the steps of the wandering sea-boy to inquire so anxiously after my fate? Never, I know, may I again claim the tear that then stood in your eye, nor the more than sister's welcome which greeted the return of the unforgotten Edward. There will be no such tale to tell of me this time; and now perhaps it is better so for both. Still, for my sake, and for the memory of that evening, you will, I am sure, kindly receive Captain Thornton as the best and truest friend that your ill-starred cousin has ever known.

"'He can also, should you feel so inclined, impart to you the short manuscript which I leave in his hands. It was written for myself alone, in hours of the deepest affliction, and with the view of recalling my thoughts when I felt that they were wandering to the very borders of distraction. I have since, I will own, wished at times that it might some day meet your eye, and that you at least might know how far I may have deserved the censure which, as I am aware, has been so unsparingly cast upon

blighted career. Should you ever glance over those pages, you will also see how deep, how true, how constant has been that love which I have borne you through life. It is a strange tale, but one which the proudest daughters of England are not unwilling to hear, and to which Lady Sheerness herself may henceforth allow you to listen.

“Commend me to her; remember me also to Elmswater: I would die at peace with every one. Indeed, now that all is over, I can rejoice to think that you have insured the happiness of so many and the welfare of the family.

“The spirit of my former days has been so long dead within me, even before this fatal hour, that I have learned to distrust Hope herself. Should that spirit again revive when released from this shattered frame, should it ever reach those bright regions for which it was wont to long, we shall meet again, Sophia, there where there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage, but where we shall be like the angels of Heaven. How my soul will then rush to thine, and tell thee of its unaltered allegiance. But, alas! where will it gather strength for such a transit? It is sinking so fast within me, that the very powers of perception are failing me. Scarcely can I now discern the paper before me, and Thornton is holding my hand as it traces this last farewell of

“Your ever faithful

“EDWARD.”

“It was but too true; the signature was scarcely legible, and when the pen fell from his hand, Rockingham’s head dropped, with a deep groan, upon the pillow, from which he never raised it again. At the end of a few moments, he rallied slightly, and making me a sign that he had something to say to me, he muttered convulsively in my ear the following words:—‘Of course you will see her yourself, and alone, and you will bear witness to what I have written.’ As yet I was not aware to whom the letter was addressed; in answer to my inquiry, he feebly said,—‘The paper—the manuscript—I cannot pronounce her name now.’ Within three hours he was no more.

“Thus ended the noblest, the bravest, the most interesting being that I have ever met. I know, my dear William, that with you I need not enlarge upon the many qualities which, in so short a time, had endeared him to you almost as much as to me. But he felt too deeply and too keenly for this life; and great as will ever be my sorrow for his untimely end, I should occasionally be inclined almost to rejoice that he should be stretched no longer on the rack of this rude world.

“The packet which he had mentioned, and which I did not open until after his death, contained a short letter for me, bequeathing to me all he possessed; and it enclosed likewise a manuscript memoir respecting himself. As I am anxious that this paper should not be exposed to the many chances of my adventurous life I shall deliver it, with this letter, to your solicitor. I beg, my dear William, that you will preserve it for me as safely and as private

as possible. It will, in connection with what I am now writing, convey every particular that I myself know with respect to Edward's sorrows and fate; and I feel, from what he himself said to me, that I am not committing any indiscretion in imparting them to you. I will now proceed with my narrative.

"The manuscript clearly pointed out to whom Rockingham's last letter was to be delivered. I lost no time, upon my recent arrival here, in calling at Lord Arlingford's house. I found him alone; he spoke of his brother in terms of affection, expressed much concern at his loss, and inquired, with apparent interest, into every detail of his death. But when I informed him that I had been requested by Edward to deliver to Lady Arlingford a letter written upon his death-bed, the marquis appeared rather embarrassed, and said that, with my permission, he would defer his answer until the following day, when he would communicate with me. I accordingly received next morning a note from him, to inform me that, late in the afternoon, Lady Arlingford would see me.

"When I called I found her sitting in her boudoir; her back was to the light, so that I could not see the unrivalled beauty of her face, but her manner to me seemed cold, constrained, and much altered from what it had been a few months before, when we were conversing together upon the issue of her brother-in-law's trial. When I presented the letter, she took it from my hands without any apparent emotion, and merely inquired if that were all. I told her that I had also a memoir of Edward's life, written by himself, and which I was at liberty to communicate to her, as she would see by the letter, if agreeable to her. She coldly answered, 'Of course.' I delivered the memoir and then retired.

"Such, my dear William, was the reception I met with from the person to whom the noblest of mankind had devoted and sacrificed his life. As you well know, I am no Radical; but I must accuse myself of having, for once only in my life, uttered, as I left Lord Arlingford's house, one deep curse upon the honours and distinctions which had so fatally seduced its beautiful and faithless inmate from every more exalted and more generous impulse of her heart.

"Three days since I received a second note, this time from Lady Arlingford herself, requesting that I should call upon her at an hour that she appointed. I again found her sitting alone in the same room; the afternoon was dark and foggy, and though I could not well distinguish her features, she appeared to me even more altered than during our previous interview. In a voice colder and more subdued than before, she asked me a few details respecting Edward's last moments; but there was between us so much mutual constraint and embarrassment, that I gladly seized the first opportunity for withdrawing. As I rose, she delivered to me a paper, and said,—'I trust, Captain Thornton, that I have committed no indiscretion in copying this manuscript. I should take it as an act of great kindness if you would allow me to preserve the original and yourself take my copy, which, I assure you, is perfectly accurate and faithful.'—I could not but yield to this request, altho

my assent implied a real sacrifice on my part; and I retired. I subsequently found that the paper which she had given to me was written all in her own hand: how she could possibly, in so short a space of time, have copied so long a manuscript, I am still at a loss to conceive; but I must conclude my sad tale.

"I had almost reached the hall of Arlingford House, when I perceived that, in the hurry and confusion of my farewell, I had dropped my gloves in Lady Arlingford's boudoir; and as she had seemed to me on the point of leaving it by another door at the moment I was withdrawing, I saw no objection in returning myself to seek for them.

"As I re-entered the little room, which was now almost in complete darkness, I at first fancied myself alone; but ere I could reach the spot where I had been sitting, I heard a low moaning sound which struck me to the heart. My dear William, what a sight I then beheld!

"No longer on her stately couch, but prostrate upon the floor, her long hair floating around her in dishevelled masses, and her whole frame rent with the violence of her convulsive sobs—the haughty marchioness lay at my very feet. She did not hear me re-enter, and when I attempted to raise her, she scarcely seemed to recognise me.

"I was sorely perplexed how to act, as you may well suppose; but her consciousness soon returned, and, in a wild and distracted voice, she inquired how I came still to be there. I endeavoured to explain the motive of my abrupt reappearance, and a moment or two of complete silence ensued.

"‘Captain Thornton,’ said she, at last, in a more composed tone, ‘it appears to be God’s will that you should know the secret of my life; and I feel sure that it is safe in your keeping. Other duties must debar me now from vindicating myself. Still, I am almost glad you should know that I am not the cold-hearted betrayer of your friend, but the sad victim of the designs of others. The whole truth has been revealed to me now, but too late. Our letters have been intercepted; by whom, I can well guess. During three long years, every endeavour has been used, by all whom I most loved, honoured, and trusted, to persuade me that he was both unworthy and unmindful of me. And thus my heart, which was so long faithful, was at last seduced, as it were, from itself, by a combination of artifices and of circumstances too powerful for my youth and my inexperience. It is useless and impossible for me to say more. From what you have just witnessed, you will see how great is my punishment—greater, Captain Thornton, I solemnly assure you, than I have ever deserved. But leave me—oh! leave me,’ she added again, in a strange and excited voice: ‘*my sacrifice must be completed.*’

"I pressed her hand to my lips, and I was withdrawing, but she recalled me, and inquired anxiously who was to see Edward’s manuscript.

"‘No one, I pledge my word,’ answered I, ‘but my brother and myself.’

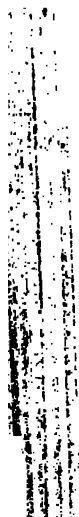
“ ‘No one else, I trust,’ replied she, eagerly, ‘as you pity me, and cherish your friend’s memory. And as to your brother, I leave you to judge how far, for my sake, you should withhold or communicate, when speaking with him only, what you have to-day learned.’

“ Thus we parted, and I have not seen her again. I can have no doubt, from her tone and manner, that all she said was gospel truth; and I trust that I am acting in fairness to her, and in accordance with her own secret wishes, in imparting to you all that I am here confiding. Of course, my dear William, I need not impress upon you the absolute necessity of utter and complete secrecy. I will write again, if I can, before I sail. In the mean time, believe me

“ Your affectionate Brother,

“ CHARLES THORNTON.”

THE END.





Front.

MAN-EATER AND FIRE-EATER.

P. 113

THE
PRIVATE LIFE
OF
AN EASTERN KING.

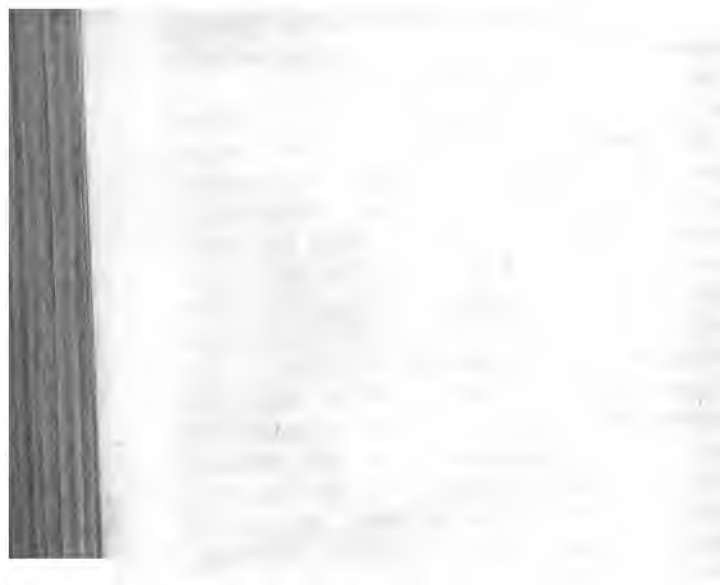
COMPILED FOR A MEMBER OF THE HOUSEHOLD OF HIS LATE
MAJESTY, NUSSIR-U-DEEN, KING OF OUDE.

BY
WILLIAM KNIGHTON,
AUTHOR OF "FOREST LIFE IN CEYLON," "TROPICAL SKETCHES,"
ETC. ETC.

New Edition, Revised.

LONDON:
ROUTLEDGE & CO. FARRINGDON STREET;
NEW YORK: 18, BEEKMAN STREET.
1857.

[The Author reserves the Right of Translation.]



PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION,

BY THE COMPILER.

SOME of the incidents recorded in the following chapters were the subjects of conversation at a friend's house in the autumn of 1854. I made the acquaintance of the narrator—the “Member of the Household;”—and, thinking the facts strange, I proposed to him to write a book on the subject. He was by no means unwilling. Chapter after chapter was compiled from his notes and verbal communications, and read out to him as each was finished. The “Member of the Household,” however, would not put his name to it; so the work was at first issued anonymously.

Personally I have had no knowledge of the circumstances related in the following pages; but, since they were committed to writing, abundant proofs of the truth of the narrative have been forthcoming. “The book comes before us,” said the *Times*, “without a name, but with every other mark of authenticity.” I may add, that there is scarcely a fact narrated in it, of which I have not had some indirect or direct corroborative evidence, since it was first issued in May last.

W. K.

CHELSEA, October, 1855.



PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION,

BY THE "MEMBER OF THE HOUSEHOLD."

THE following narrative is a record of facts—not in any case fictitious. It has been compiled from the notes I took of passing events during the three and a half years that I lived in the court of Lucknow.

Nussir-u-deen has long been gathered to his fathers ; but the principal European members of his household are still alive, and in England. I have not given their names or my own ; for the public would know as little of the one as of the other, had I done so. Should the truth of my statements be denied, however, or the names considered necessary to substantiate the narrative, I shall have no hesitation in giving them all.

It would have been easy for me to have thrown something of the heroic into the account of my residence at the court of Lucknow ; but I have adhered simply to the truth, and have endeavoured *solely to describe the inner life of the palace as I found it.* Much there was that was strange—much

there was that was horrible about that life : I witnessed many scenes which I could not describe without offending against conventional propriety ; but, in all that the reader will find recorded, exaggeration has been strictly guarded against.

That Oude is one of the most miserably-governed countries under heaven, is no secret ; and that it would be a blessing to its numerous inhabitants were the Indian government to do for it what has been so well done for the Punjab, every one will admit. I have not written a political disquisition, however, but simply a personal narrative ; and therefore the state of the country is but incidentally alluded to occasionally in the following pages.

My task is done.

LONDON, *October*, 1855.

THE PRIVATE LIFE
OF
AN EASTERN KING.

CHAPTER I.

MY INTRODUCTION TO ROYALTY.

Aspect of Lucknow—Armed citizens—Beasts of burden—Oude a province and a kingdom—The Durbar—Private audience with the king—The Nuzza—The troubles of royalty—Studies—The barber—Drawing near the dinner-hour.

It is now more than twenty years since business first took me to Lucknow. Nussir-u-deen, the son and successor of Ghazi-u-deen, the first king, was then upon the throne of Oude.

Strange tales I had heard in Calcutta of the peculiar features of Lucknow and its court—of the extensive menagerie maintained by the king—of his fondness for Europeans not in the Company's service—of the warlike tastes and bearing of the inhabitants of Oude, and the abundance of matchlocks, shields, spears, and swords, to be seen borne by *fierce-looking fellows* in the streets of Lucknow. *I had heard much of all these things, and expected*

to be disappointed, as I had been before frequently. I was *not* disappointed, however. For once, the reality exceeded my anticipation.

The great extent of the buildings, generally called the king's palace, surprised me in the first place. It was not properly a palace, but a continuation of palaces, stretching all along the banks of the Goomty, the river on which Lucknow is built. In this, however, the royal residence in Oude but resembled what one reads of the seraglio at Constantinople, the Khan's residence at Teheran, and the imperial buildings of Pekin. In all oriental states, the palaces are not so much the abode of the sovereign only, as the centre of the government ;— little towns, in fact, containing extensive lines of buildings occupied by the harem and its vast number of attendants, containing courts, gardens, tanks, fountains, and squares, as well as the offices of the chief ministers of state. Such was the case in Lucknow. One side of the narrow Goomty—a river not much broader than a middling-sized London street—was lined by the royal palace ; the other was occupied by the *rumna*, or park, in which the menagerie was maintained. The extent of this collection of animals, and its variety, exceeded anything that I had supposed possible. Elephants in scores, tigers, rhinoceroses, antelopes, cheetahs or hunting-leopards, lynxes, Persian cats, Chinese dogs, might all be seen sunning themselves in this

park, either in their cages, or stretched listlessly on the grass, as commonly as sheep and cows in an English meadow.

There was nothing grand or striking about the exterior of the palace—the Fureed Buksh, as it is called. Its extent was the only imposing feature about it, and struck me far more forcibly than any magnificence of architecture or loftiness of structure would have done; for I was prepared for the latter, whilst for the former feature I was not prepared.

Nor did the streets of Lucknow disappoint me. The streets around the palace have been compared to Dresden by Bishop Heber; others have declared that Lucknow resembled Moscow. I have never been in either city; but I should fancy they cannot be very like each other. The only large city, that I have been in, which resembles the lower part of the town, in its narrow streets, its laden camels, and its bazaars, is Grand Cairo in Egypt. Dresden, Moscow, Cairo,—there is room enough here for choice; and yet in all these no counterparts will be found to many of the most striking characteristics of Lucknow.

In the first place, with respect to the armed population, we shall find nothing similar in any of these places. The people of Moscow may wear knives about their persons, and in Cairo you may occasionally see men with arms in their hands; but *in Lucknow every man goes armed. With match-lock or gun or pistol most probably; with a short*

bent sword, called a *tulwar*, and a shield certainly, you find every man in Lucknow pass you by. Even those engaged in the ordinary business of life have their *tulwar*; whilst the idlers have both pistols and shield as well, however otherwise mean their attire. The shield of buffalo-hide, with brass knobs for the most part, is usually thrown up upon the left shoulder; and with the fierce-looking moustaches of the Rajpoots and Patans, and the black beards of the Mussulmans, *tulwar* and shield together give an eminently warlike air to the swaggering figures of the self-sufficient citizens. Nor is it wonderful that the population of Lucknow should be warlike in its aspect; for Oude is the great nursery of soldiers for the Company's army. The forces of the Bengal presidency come almost exclusively from Oude.

The love of arms is fostered from infancy in the inhabitants of Lucknow. An arrow or a spear is the usual plaything of the boys there; small wooden models of *tulwars* and pistols are put into the hands of the babies, just as English nurses give their children rattles to play with.

The streets of the town presented therefore an eminently novel aspect to me. It was as if I had found myself transported suddenly into some of the *scenes* of which I had read in childish histories and *novels*, in which all the men are heroes, and show *their heroism* in their gait and manners.

Nor in Cairo or Moscow would you find elephants

used as the ordinary beasts of burden. Nothing can be more ludicrous than the incongruity between the huge animals and the narrow confined streets in which they have to travel. One of them blocks up the entire road ; just as the laden camel, with his huge net at either side, full of goods, does in Cairo. In Lucknow elephants and camels are almost equally common. In the lower and filthier parts of the town, where the bazaars are situated, horses are seldom seen, elephants and camels are the common labourers. For a long time I could not see an elephant or a laden camel sweeping down one of these narrow lanes without feeling an almost irresistible inclination to laugh aloud, even when I was endangering my own safety by remaining exposed too long.

Then there is the contrast, too, between the Hindu and the Mussulman population, resembling each other only in the arms which they carry—in every other respect unlike. Lucknow is a city of about 300,000 inhabitants, of whom two-thirds are probably Hindus, generally of the lower orders ; the Mussulman population is somewhat aristocratic, for the court is Mussulman.

But perhaps my readers know nothing of the country of which Lucknow is the capital. In a few words I shall be able to give them some definite information on the subject. That there is a sauce called "*the King of Oude's sauce*," and that—

"The King of Oude is mighty proud,"

are two facts which may be learned from the shop-windows in London, and from that voracious chronicler, Charles O'Malley,* respectively.

When Lord Wellesley went out to India as governor-general, towards the end of the last century, Oude was larger than England. It had been a province of the Great Mogul empire, and its ruler was called the Nawab Vizier. Warren Hastings, by plundering two of the female members of the Nawab's family, and torturing their attendant eunuchs to extort treasure from them, had made the Nawab of Oude known to quiet people in England some years before; for Burke had thundered forth his indignant denunciations of Hastings' conduct, and the Nawab of Oude was looked upon in Europe as an ill-used gentleman: the fact being, that he was delighted his predecessor's widows, the Bhow Begum and another, should have been plundered, and not he; for he was only his predecessor's son by adoption.

When Lord Wellesley went to India, as I have said, Oude was larger than England, and had always been the most faithful ally of the British. His lordship rewarded its fidelity by annexing half of it to the Bengal presidency. He could not find any better way of recompensing the people for the good

* *Charles O'Malley the Irish Dragoon*, by C. Lever. Oude is properly pronounced as rhyming with proud; not as if spelt Oode, as the geographers often tell us.

faith of their rulers than by putting them under his own government.

The Marquis of Hastings *borrowed* two crores of rupees from Ghazi-u-deen, that is, two millions of pounds sterling, and, in return for the loan, gave the Nawab a barren tract of land at the foot of the Himalayas called the Terai—a tract conquered from Nepaul—and with it the title of king: *His Highness the Nawab* was changed into *His Majesty the King*; and Ghazi was fain to be content, or at all events to appear so.* It was in 1819 that Ghazi became the anointed of the Company; and in 1827 he was succeeded by his son, Nussir, a young man of about thirty years of age when I visited Lucknow.

In its present contracted dimensions, Oude is a triangular piece of country, stretching from Nepaul to the Ganges: its broader proportions skirting Nepaul upon the north, its narrower end resting upon the sacred river on the south. It slopes gradually from north-west to south-east, the only high land it contains being the strip so generously given up by the Marquis of Hastings after the Nepaulese war. This district, the Terai, is very populous—with wild beasts; and is rich—in jungle.

* I have only related above what is matter of history. "Most assuredly," says a writer who urges the annexation of all Oude, "most assuredly Warren Hastings, Lord Teignmouth, Lord Wellesley, Lord Hastings, and Lord Auckland, would never have acted in private life as they did in the capacity of governor-general towards prostrate Oude."—*Calcutta Review*, vol. iii. p. 376.

Stripped as it has been of its rupees and its most valuable provinces by successive governors-general, Oude is still more populous than any of the German states in Europe, except Prussia and Austria; whilst in extent it exceeds that of Denmark; of Holland and Belgium put together; of Switzerland, Saxony, and Wirtemberg, could they be united. In Europe it would be a country superior to any of these, rivalling Bavaria or Naples in importance; in Asia it is considered as a mere trifle, about which a great deal too much has already been said.

It was private business, as I have already stated, that took me to Lucknow. I went there in the ordinary routine of mercantile life, not as an "adventurer"—a name once so hateful to the Honourable Company. Through a friend at court, I solicited and obtained an audience of his majesty, more through curiosity to see what an Indian sovereign was like, than from any other motive. Since Delhi has been shorn of its splendour, and become a dilapidated burlesque of what it once was, there is no native court in India to vie with that of Oude in wealth and magnificence. The fact of my not having been presented by the resident—the English officer appointed by the Indian government to watch British interests in Oude, and to keep the king in order—my not having been presented by the resident, I say, probably induced the king to look upon me with a favourable eye. I got a hint that there was an office

in the king's household vacant, and that if I met his majesty, and offered the usual present, I might be accepted, and appointed to it.

No European can be taken into the king of Oude's service without the sanction—really, the permission—of the resident. My next aim was, therefore, to obtain this sanction. I was introduced to “the great saheb”—a man whom, perhaps, you would jostle in London as if he were only an ordinary mortal, and yet who exercised a more unlimited sway over a king and court and five millions of people than any sovereign in Europe. I was introduced; a few letters passed between us; the sanction was given, and, under the conditions that I was not to meddle or intermeddle, in any way whatsoever, in the politics of Oude,—not to mix myself up in the intrigues for power between rival ministers, or in the quarrels of warring zemindars (large landed proprietors),—I was permitted to take service under His Majesty of Oude.

These preliminaries to my appointment arranged, I was to appear before the king again—this time in private. No one must approach an eastern monarch empty-handed. A nuzza, or present, must always be offered, and is offered by every one, even at the ordinary levees, the king returning another of greater value subsequently. On the former occasion it was *in full dūrbar* that I had seen his majesty, seated on *his throne*, at the end of a long hall. I had expected

to see him sitting cross-legged on a cushion. He was in a gilt or golden arm-chair, with a rich oriental dress on him certainly, and a crown, ornamented with a feather from the bird of paradise, upon his head; but still, with a much more European air about him and about the apartment, than I had expected. Then, however, I caught but a glimpse of all this; even his majesty's face I did not well see. On the present occasion, however, when I was to have a private interview, he was walking with some members of his household (Europeans) in a garden of the palace.

I remained at the end of a walk to await his arrival. My present (five gold mohurs*) rested on the open palm of my hand, a fine muslin handkerchief being thrown over the hand, between it and the pieces of gold. The palm of the left hand supported the right, on which the muslin handkerchief and the money were placed. In that attitude I awaited his majesty. It was my first lesson in court etiquette; and I could not help thinking, as I stood thus, that I looked very like a fool. My hat was resting on a seat hard by. I was uncovered, of course; and the day was sunny and hot. Before the king came round, I was in an extempore bath. At length the party approached. His majesty was dressed as an English gentleman, in a plain black

* A gold mohur is equal to 16 rupees, or 32 shillings.

suit, a London hat on his head. His face was pleasing in its expression, of a light, a very light sepia tint. His black hair, whiskers, and moustaches contrasted well with the colour of the cheeks, and set off a pair of piercing black eyes, small and keen. He was thin, and of the middle height. As he approached, he conversed in English with his attendants. What they were talking about I forget, although I heard their conversation; I was too much taken up with myself, in fact, to pay much attention to it.

The king drew near, smiled as he approached me, put his left hand under mine, touched the gold with the fingers of his right hand, and then observed,—

“So you have decided on entering my service?”

“I have, your majesty,” was my reply.

“We shall be good friends. I love the English.”

So saying, he passed, resuming his former conversation. I joined the attendants.

“Put your gold mohurs up at once,” whispered my friend, “or some of the natives will take them.”

They were slipped into my pocket forthwith. I took up my hat, and followed the party into the palace.

The rooms were generally large, and were ornamented with rich chandeliers and gaudily-framed pictures in great numbers. Generally speaking, *there was too great a crowding of objects in each. The effect was to bewilder, rather than to please.*

Rich lustres and chandeliers, cabinets of rare woods, of ivory or lacquered ware, suits of armour, jewelled arms, and richly-decorated shields, were to be seen on all sides : there was too great a profusion of such things. The dining-room, the private dining-room,—that used by the king when he had his intimate friends around him,—was the only neat room in the palace. It was not overcrowded ; it differed from an English dining-room in no essential particular.

Once a month his majesty gave a public breakfast to the British officers of his regiments, who came for that purpose from the cantonments, situated five miles from Lucknow, on the other side of the Goomty. Public dinners were also occasionally given to the resident and his friends ; but all these formal parties were very irksome to the king.

“ Thank God ! ” I have heard him repeatedly say, after being released from these ceremonious parties,—“ thank God, they are all gone ! Now let us have a glass of wine in peace. Bopperry bopp,* but how stupid these things are ! ” And with that his majesty would yawn and stretch himself, and take off his jewelled cap and toss it to the other end of the room.

On the first evening of my arrival at the palace, the king held one of his private dinners. Five *European* members of his household usually attended

* A common native exclamation, similar to “ Oh, dear me ! ” or something of that kind.

these. One was nominally the king's tutor, employed to teach him English. The king valorously resolved over and over again to give up an hour a day to study ; for he was anxious to speak English fluently. As it was, he was often obliged to eke out his sentences with a Hindustani word. I have seen his majesty sit down by the tutor, some books on the table before them.

" Now, master" — (he always called his tutor " master") — " now, master, we will begin in earnest."

The tutor would read a passage from the *Spectator*, or from some popular novel, and the king would read it after him. The tutor would read again—

" Boppery bopp, but this is dry work !" would his majesty exclaim, stretching himself, when it came to his turn to read once more ; " let us have a glass of wine, master."

The glass of wine led to conversation, the books were pushed away, and so the lesson ended. Such lessons seldom occupied more than ten minutes. The tutor got about fifteen hundred pounds a year for giving them.

His tutor, then, was one of the king's friends ; his librarian was another ; a German painter and musician was a third ; the captain of his body-guard was a fourth ; and last, but by no means least, his barber—his European barber—was a fifth. Of these five I was one.

The barber was the greatest man of the five. His influence was far greater than that of the native prime minister, or Nawab. He was known to be an especial favourite, and all men paid court to him. His history, truly and honestly written, would form one of the oddest chapters of human life. All that I knew of him was this :—

He had come out to Calcutta as cabin-boy in a ship. Having been brought up as a hair-dresser in London, he had left his ship, on arriving in Calcutta, to resume his old business. He was successful ; he pushed and puffed himself into notoriety. At length he took to going up the river with European merchandise for sale ; he became, in fact, what is called there a river-trader. Arrived at Lucknow, he found a resident,—not the same who was there when I entered the king's service,—anxious to have the ringlets of his wig restored to their pristine crispness and brilliancy ; and the river-trader was not above resuming his old business. Marvellous was the alteration he made in the resident's appearance ; and so the great saheb himself introduced the wonder-working barber to the king. That resident is in England now, and writes M.P. after his name.

The king had peculiarly lank, straight hair ; not the most innocent approach to a curl had ever been seen on it. The barber wrought wonders again, and the king was delighted. Honours and wealth were showered upon the lucky coiffeur. He was given a

title of nobility. *Sofraz Khan* ("the Illustrious Chief") was his new name, and men bowed to him in Oude. The whilom cabin-boy was a man of power now, and wealth was rapidly flowing in upon him. The king's favourite soon becomes wealthy in a native state. The barber, however, had other sources of profit open to him besides bribery: he supplied all the wine and beer used at the king's table. Every European article required at court came through his hands, and the rupees accumulated in thousands. "What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour?" is a question as apt now in every oriental court as it was when Esther, the Jewish queen, recorded it.

Nussir put no bounds to the honours he heaped upon the fascinating barber; unlimited confidence was placed in him. By small degrees he had at last become a regular guest at the royal table, and sat down to take dinner with the king as a thing of right; nor would his majesty taste a bottle of wine opened by any other hands than the barber's. So afraid was his majesty of being poisoned by his own family, that every bottle of wine was sealed in the barber's house before being brought to the king's table; and before he opened it, the little man looked carefully at the seal to see that it was all right. He then opened it, and took a portion of a glass first, before filling one for the king. Such was the etiquette at the royal table when I first took my place at it.

The confidence reposed in the favourite was, of course, soon generally known over India, or at all events in Bengal. The "low menial," as the *Calcutta Review* called him,* was the subject of squibs, and pasquinades, and attacks, and satirical verses without number ; and marvellously little did the low menial care what they said of him, as long as he accumulated rupees. They had the wit and the satire, and he had the money ; so far, he was content.

Of the newspapers, the most incessant in its attacks on the barber was the *Agra Uckbar*, a paper since defunct. Shortly before I left Lucknow, the barber employed a European clerk in the resident's office to answer the attacks of the *Uckbar* in one of the Calcutta papers with which he corresponded ; and for this service the clerk was paid 100 Rs. (10*l*.) a month. So that, if the barber had not his own poet, like the tailors in London, he had, at all events, his Own Correspondent, like the *Times*.

On my introduction to the private dining-table of royalty, it may be easily supposed, therefore, that the two persons whom I was most anxious to see and to become acquainted with were the king and the barber ; but I have delayed so long upon the threshold, that I must throw the dinner into another chapter.

* Art. "Kingdom of Oude," vol. iii.

CHAPTER II.

THE AMUSEMENTS OF A KING.

The private dinner—Etiquette—Female attendants—The barber's office—After dinner—Nautches—The puppet-show—Royal wit—The gauze curtain—The lake pavilion—Games with royalty—An illustration from Europe—Slippers *versus* turbans—Leap-frog—Snowballing.

WE awaited the king in an ante-room ; and a little before nine o'clock, the usual dinner-hour in the palace, he made his appearance, leaning on the arm of his favourite, the barber. Of the two the king was much the taller, the favourite incomparably the more muscular and healthy-looking. One of those little men indeed was this favourite, who make up in breadth what they want in height. His majesty was dressed, as he had been in the garden, in a plain black English suit, a dress-coat having replaced the frock he wore on the former occasion. An ordinary black silk neck-tie, and patent-leather boots, completed his costume. He was a gentlemanly-looking man, not without a certain kingly grace—his air and figure a complete contrast to that of his companion, on whom nature had indelibly stamped the characteristics of *vulgarity*. Both were dressed similarly ; and the contrast they presented was made all the more striking

by the outward habiliments in which they resembled each other.

The scene in the dining-room, as we took our places at the table, was a strange one—a strange mixture of occidental comforts and oriental display. The king was seated in a gilt arm-chair, raised a few inches above the level of the floor. He occupied the middle of one side of the table, and we sat on either hand. The opposite side of the table was left unoccupied, partly for the convenience of the servants when removing and placing dishes on the table, but chiefly that his majesty might see without difficulty whatever entertainments there were for the evening's amusement.

We had no sooner taken our seats, than half a dozen female attendants, richly dressed and distinguished for their beauty, came from behind a gauze curtain or screen that occupied one end of the room. I was warned not to gaze upon these ladies too curiously, as they were supposed to be kept from the eyes of man, like other ladies of the harem ; supposed so only, however. During the evening I found many opportunities of regarding them without subjecting myself to observation, or without appearing to take any notice of them.

They were all young and handsome. Their colour was of the brunette tint of an Andalusian belle, not darker ; and their jet-black hair, taken back from the forehead, and twisted in rolls behind, ornamented

mented with pearls and silver pins, formed a pleasing contrast with the delicate tint of their skin, and the flush of excitement which tinged their cheeks. An outer covering of thin semi-transparent cloth, richly embroidered, was thrown over the form, and partially rested upon the back of the head. The outlines of the shoulders were quite distinct through the thin envelopes in which they were enrobed, all more or less transparent. The heaving of the chest, as they gently waved fans, made of the peacock's feathers, backwards and forwards over the king, was striking and beautiful. The lower portion of the person was hidden in wide *pyjāmas*, or Turkish trousers, made of satin, of a bright crimson or purple colour. These pyjamas fitted closely to the waist, and gradually became looser and more voluminous as they descended. They were collected above the ankle with gold-embroidered belts, corresponding to those dimly seen through the gauze cloak at the waist.

They took their stations noiselessly behind the king's chair. He made no remark. No one seemed to regard them at all. It was the ordinary routine of the dinner-table; nothing more. Their arms were bare nearly to the shoulder; and as they waved their feathery fans gently about, two at a time, gracefully drawing them in succession above and about the king's chair, it was a sight worth seeing. *If the females of India excel in any species of*

physical beauty, it is particularly in the fine mould of the limbs. A statuary might have taken some of those delicately-shaped arms and hands as models for his Venus. There they plied their graceful task silently and monotonously the whole evening, fanning, and attending to the king's hookah by turns, relieving each other in regular succession, until his majesty left the table, or (as was more generally the case) was assisted from the table into his harem.

The dinner was altogether European in other respects. There was little to distinguish it from a fine dinner in a fine Calcutta house. The native servants came and went according to their wont,—careful, attentive, silent; we chatted and listened to the king. Soup, fish, joints, curry and rice, pastry and dessert, succeeded each other in the ordinary routine. The cookery was excellent; for a Frenchman presided in the royal kitchen,—a cook that had formerly been *chef-de-cuisine* in the Bengal Club in Calcutta. But neither the French cook nor the European coachman were allowed any liberty out of their respective stations; whilst the English barber was all in all. Such are the caprices of power!

Mussulman though he was, Nussir stinted himself not in wine; nor, indeed, did the native nobility of Oude generally. I have heard his majesty declare more than once, that the Koran did not forbid the use of wine, as the vulgar supposed, but only the abuse of it. Other men were allowed the use, but

a king might also be allowed the abuse,—such, I fancy, was his majesty's doctrine ; for he seldom left the dining-table altogether sober. The wines most usually set before us were claret, madeira, and champagne, all of excellent quality, and rendered delicious, amid the excessive heats of a large portion of the year, by being iced previously.

The dinner proceeded ; and the wine was gradually rendering the king and his courtiers more free and easy.

“ I have always loved Europeans,” said his majesty aloud, and addressing us generally ; “ I have always loved Europeans, and the natives hate me. My family would poison me if they could ; but they fear me too. Wallah, but how they fear me ! ”

“ Your majesty has made them fear you,” said the barber.

“ I have ; it is quite true,” was the king's reply. Then turning to us on his left, he asked :

“ You often see the people of Lucknow fighting with each other, don't you ? ”

“ Too often, your majesty,” was the reply.

“ And killing each other ! ”

“ Often killing each other.”

“ Ah, ha ! so they do ; but they never touch you, do they ? ”

“ Never, your majesty.”

“ No ; the wretches know too well that I would

exterminate them if they did, I would. They know I love the Europeans, and they are wary."

The dessert came ; the richest and most luscious fruits that tropical luxuriance produces were placed upon the table ; and with the dessert the evening's amusements began. These amusements, I afterwards found, were very varied. Sometimes tumblers would exhibit their "calisthenic feats," as they would be called in a London play-bill,—men who appeared to have no bones in their bodies, but could tie themselves up in knots, walk any way but that in which Nature intended, outdo the monkey in monkey-like tricks, and go away well pleased if people laughed at them. Sometimes the court jesters had a keen encounter of wits, accompanied with arrant buffoonery, not unlike the performances of harlequin and pantaloon and clown in our pantomimes. Sometimes conjurors exhibited their feats of *diablerie* and snake-charming. Sometimes we had cock-fighting,—fights between quails or partridges on the table before his majesty. Sometimes a puppet-show was introduced, and the marionettes acted and danced spasmodically, like human beings in modern tragedies. With these there was generally a group of dancing-girls and attendant musicians performing somewhere in the room.

On my first appearance at the royal table, the amusements for the evening were a puppet-show and the usual nautch-girls. His majesty laughed

heartily at the performances of the little burlesques of men and women ; laughed heartily, and enjoyed himself. The barber saw that his majesty was pleased, and condescended to express his approbation also of the show. The nautch-girls exhibited their fine figures in graceful attitudes, advancing and retiring, now with one hand held over the head, now with the other. Their faces were not so captivating as those of the female attendants behind his majesty ; but their forms were perfectly moulded, and they managed their limbs with a graceful dexterity not to be surpassed. Voluptuous is, perhaps, the title that most correctly indicates the entire character of their performance. Attendant musicians played upon a species of lute and tamborine behind them, advancing and retreating with them, and accompanying the instruments with their voices. The instrumental seemed the principal part of the musical performance ; the voice accompanied it, rather than it the voice.*

* The following extract from "the History of Hyder-Shah," published by his grandson, Prince Gholam Mohammed when in England, in 1855 (although originally compiled during Hyder's life-time), will show that such entertainments are usual in Indian courts.

"There is, for the most part, a comedy every night, that commences about eight in the evening, and lasts till eleven. It is intermixed with dances and songs. At the present time (perhaps about 1780), the court of Hyder is the most brilliant in India ; and his company of performers is without contradiction the first, as well on account of its riches, as because the Raja-

But nothing of all this graceful attitudinising and profuse exhibition of fine forms was attended to by the king or his party. The nautch-girls danced, and their attendants played and sang ; but no man regarded them, unless it was myself. The king was taken up with the puppet-show, and every one looked at it and praised it.

deres are the women to whom he gives the preference. Being sovereign of part of Begapore, he has every facility of procuring, amongst this class of women, those who are most remarkable for their beauty and talents.

“The comedians are all women. A directress, who is likewise manager, purchases young girls at the age of four or five years, who are chosen on account of their beauty. She causes them to be inoculated, and then provides them with masters both for dancing and music. They are taught every accomplishment that can inspire the prince and his court with the love of pleasure. They begin to appear in public at the age of about ten or eleven years. They have generally the most delicate features, large black eyes, beautiful eye-brows, small mouth, and the finest teeth. Their cheeks are dimpled, and their black hair hangs in flowing tresses to the ground. Their complexion is a clear and light brown, not such as that of the mulatto women, who are incapable of blushing. Their habit is always a fine gauze, very richly embroidered with gold, and they are covered with jewels. No Bayadere of the prince’s company is more than seventeen years old. At that age they are dismissed, and either travel over the province or attach themselves to the Pagodas.” Just when (in Europe) they would be attaining perfection of bodily mould and scientific instruction, “they are dismissed !” A sad lot truly, to purchase a lifetime of sorrow and neglect by six or seven years of puppetdom. And yet there are people in *England* who tell us, in the blandest tones of mock sentimentality, that such details ought not to be given—that the people of *England* ought not to be informed how the Indian princess, whom they uphold, spend their time !

At length his majesty gave a whispered order to the barber, who went out, brought something in his hand, and gave it to the king. The regal chair was pushed back, and his majesty condescended to advance to the front of the puppet-show, going round the table as if to inspect it more closely. The owners exerted themselves to give still more satisfaction, regarding their fortunes as made. The king watched for a little; his hand was advanced suddenly, and as suddenly drawn back, and one of the innocent marionettes fell motionless upon the stage. It was quite plain that his majesty had a pair of scissors in his hand, and had cut the string. The performers must have been as well aware of this as we were, but they gazed in affected wonder at the catastrophe. Natives of India require no training in simulation or dissimulation. The king turned round, his face beaming with fun, and looked at us knowingly, as much as to say, "Did I not do that well?" The barber laughed loudly in reply, and other courtiers joined in the chorus.

But this was not the whole of the royal wit. The hand was pushed forward and drawn back again and again; and again and again did one after the other of the puppets fall dead and immovable upon the stage, every successive fall eliciting a shout of laughter from the table, and a blank look of *astonishment* from the general manager of the show, *who was visible directing and superintending.* When

nearly all had fallen, the royal wit was concluded by taking a candle and setting fire to the show. It was not without difficulty that the flames were extinguished.

During the rest of the evening the dancers and singers were criticised with more freedom than delicacy, the wine circulating freely, and his majesty indulging in it to a far greater extent than prudence would warrant.

It will not be supposed that during all this time I kept my eyes altogether away from the gauze curtain drawn across one end of the apartment. I had been told previously that some favourites of the harem were allowed by his majesty to witness the dinner-parties from behind that screen, and that it would be rude to be observed gazing intently at it. I found many opportunities, however, of inspecting it without violating etiquette. It was thick enough to prevent our recognising faces or figures behind, although we could see faintly the outline of shadowy masses of drapery passing to and fro. One principal figure was seated on a cushion,—the reigning favourite, doubtless; and her jewelled arms and neck glared brilliantly ever and anon as the light flashed upon them. We heard, too, a sweet feminine laugh, as the puppets were cut down, issuing from behind the screen; for although we could not see distinctly through it, on account of our distance from it, those on the other side no doubt could.

The revel proceeded ; songs were sung. His majesty became gradually more and more affected with the wine he had taken, until his consciousness was almost gone ; and he was then assisted by the female attendants and two sturdy eunuchs behind the curtain, and so off into the harem. It was astonishing how like a drunken king looked to an ordinary drunken unanointed man.

The next day I had an opportunity of inspecting that part of the palace open to my observation more fully than I had yet done. The same characteristics pervaded every portion of the interior,—too great a display of gilding and glass ; all was gaudy and glittering, not beautiful. One portion, however, struck me as being singularly picturesque. It was a lake, a small artificial lake, that occupied almost the whole of a garden ; and in the centre of it, entirely unconnected with the shores on any side, rose a neat pavilion, brilliantly painted externally, but of a picturesque form, with its pointed minarets and miniature domes. The water in the lake was perfectly clear and transparent, and numbers of large gold and silver fish darted about in it with wonderful rapidity,—not the tiny fish we see paraded in glass globes or small reservoirs in England, but good sturdy fellows, of the most brilliant colours, and many of them a foot or a foot-and-a-half long.

The pavilion in the centre of this sheet of water was reached by a boat, which was moored opposit

the side of the palace whence we had issued. My companion and friend (like myself a courtier, but high in the king's esteem) seated himself forthwith in the boat, and invited me to follow. The boatmen made their appearance at once, and we were taken across to the fairy-like house.

It was certainly the most elegant structure in Lucknow. It contained but two apartments of moderate size, both luxuriously fitted up, with divans running round the walls. In the centre of the larger apartments, on a table, stood a perfect model of the entire palace, wrought with all that elaborate minuteness of detail and perfection of colouring so characteristic of the Indian artists. The pavilion in which we stood was represented in this piece of carving by a miniature model not larger than a walnut, and yet containing every spire, every little external ornament, and even the two rooms within.

Looking out upon the water from this little island palace was enough to make you fancy you had got into fairy-land. The brilliant fish playing about incessantly, the richly decorated boat, the flowers that bordered the lake, lost in bushes which almost hid the surrounding buildings, were all features so novel and so captivating, that I thought, were I the king, I should almost desert the palace for the pavilion. His majesty seldom visited it, however; and already marks of neglect were beginning to appear around and about it. At one time, as the

attendants told me, he was fond of bringing some favourite of the harem over, the eunuchs rowing the boat; but of late years the pavilion seemed quite forgotten, and was consequently becoming neglected.

Not long after, the conversation at the dinner-table having accidentally turned upon the variegated fish, some one wondered how they would taste, or whether they were fit for food. The king maintained they were, and decided upon having some of them cooked. The following day they were placed upon the table, and we partook of them. The flavour was not very agreeable; but even had it been delicious, they were so full of minute bones as to render it almost impossible to eat them. They were a thousand times worse in this respect than the *hilsa*, a fish noted in India for its numerous bones.

My lessons in court etiquette came thick and fast upon each other. It was at a public breakfast,—that is, one of the formal breakfasts given by his majesty to the resident, his aides-de-camp, and some of the officers from the cantonments,—that the king turned suddenly round, at the conclusion of the entertainment, to a surgeon in the Company's service—let us call him Jones—

"Jones," said he, "will you play me a game of draughts?"

The king hated Jones, who was one of his own aides-de-camp, and loved to disconcert him.

"With great pleasure; I shall be honoured in playing with your majesty," was Jones's reply.

"For a hundred gold mohurs,"* said the king.

"I cannot afford to play for a hundred gold mohurs, your majesty; I am but a poor man."

"Master," said the king, turning quickly round to the tutor, "will *you* play me at draughts for a hundred gold mohurs?"

"Your majesty honours me; I shall be delighted," replied the tutor, who, from being more intimate with the king, was better acquainted with his whims and eccentricities.

The board was brought—the men were placed—the game was commenced. I happened to be near, and watched it as it proceeded. Having played chess with the tutor previously, I felt convinced he must be an excellent draughts-player; but I soon found that though the king was playing badly, the tutor was playing far worse. It was a lesson in court etiquette. The king, I found, *must not be beaten*. Nay, badly as the tutor played, admirably pretending to be doing his best, I saw that it was with difficulty he contrived to let his majesty win; and I subsequently heard, that it was no uncommon thing for a friend to engage the king's opponent in conversation, whilst his majesty slyly altered the position of some of the pieces!

* Equal to £160. A gold mohur was worth 16 rupees, or 32 shillings, as I have before remarked.

The game was finished. The tutor was beaten.

"You owe me a hundred gold mohurs," said triumphant majesty.

"I do, your majesty ; I shall bring them this evening."

"Don't forget," was majesty's reply, as he walked off to the harem.

That evening, when we assembled for dinner,—a private dinner of the king and the favoured five,—the first remark his majesty made was addressed to the tutor :

"Well, master, have you brought the gold mohurs ?"

"I have, your majesty ; they are below in my palanquin. Shall I bring them here ?"

"Nonsense, master. Keep them. Send them home again. Do you think I want your money ? Jones thought I wanted his. Did you see how the pig ate ?* Wallah, but I hate him !"

But was there no one to tell Jones, you ask perhaps, kind reader, of the king's ways ? He who advised him to accept the next challenge he received, might be the means of making him lose £160 ; for the king was so capricious, that his actions and conduct were not to be relied upon. Every member of the household, however, felt convinced that if money were taken from *him*, double its value

* *The pig being an unclean animal amongst the Moslems, the epithet "pig" is the most abusive they can use.*

would be returned as a present, either by the king or the prime minister, although the result might have been very different in the case of a man whom the king disliked.

There was little difficulty, comparatively speaking, in allowing the king to win the games of chess or draughts. He played at both, played badly, and always won. It was the etiquette not to beat majesty in anything. He frequently played with me; and I profited by the lesson I had received silently when witnessing his game with the tutor.

But when it came to billiards, allowing his majesty invariably to win, was no such easy matter. It was then necessary to have a friend by to touch the balls sily occasionally, always in favour of the king and against his adversary,—now to keep one ball from the pocket, and to send an erring one into it. This must not be done too openly. It required considerable adroitness and skill; but as long as the player played his part well, the king was content; that is, as long as he appeared unconscious of the frauds and annoyed at the results. It was then a joke; and his majesty laughed and was content.

All this may appear very childish and contemptible on the king's part, and I am not about to assert that it was otherwise; but if my readers therefore think that it was confined to the Lucknow palace,—that similar scenes do not take place in other palaces, and in more highly civilized countries

than Oude,—they are mistaken. 'The courtier who would defeat his Imperial Majesty the Emperor of all the Russias, at draughts, or chess, or billiards, must be a bold man ; and although that emperor may be no child nor fool, yet depend upon it that some method is always found by which he may come off victorious. But this is only hypothetical ; take an instance of kingly hunting, from real life, in Europe ; and then say, is it not truly as absurd as our humbugging of his swarthy majesty of Oude, " Nussir-u-deen Hyder, the asylum and refuge of the universe ? "

On St. Hubert's day, the 3rd of November, it is the custom of the Court of Berlin to have a boar-hunt at Grünewald. His majesty the king of Prussia appears on the field in a rich suit of strongly-contrasted colours,—a black velvet surcoat, with white kerseymere pantaloons. The rest of the field are in the usual scarlet and leather of our English meetings. A boar, duly prepared,—that is, *with clipped tusks*,—lest any harm should be done,—is "started." An immense field follows,—king, dogs, attendants,—a motley group, containing very various specimens of human and equine and canine nature. At an easy canter away goes majesty, and at an easy canter follow the scarlet coats and the leathern continuations, the dogs doing the duty of the day in front. *The boar is caught by the dogs, pulled down, incapable of resistance.* Some members of the hunt leap

from their saddles, and secure the dreadful wild beast, neck uppermost, the dogs being beaten and called off. His majesty draws near ; a very elegant *couteau de chasse* is put into his hand ; he dismounts, and advances to the boar. The *couteau de chasse* is drawn across the neck of the wild beast ; loud shouts applaud his majesty for his courage, skill, and determination ; and, full of his blushing honours, he canters back to the palace.

Royal life in the palace of Lucknow, and in some of the courts of continental Europe, is not so different after all, you see.

The favour and intimacy which the European members of the household enjoyed were by no means pleasing to the higher native nobility of Oude,—nay, were altogether displeasing. This was natural enough ; for the nawab, or prime minister, and the commander of the forces, and “the general” at the head of the police, Rajah Buktawir Singh by name, of whom I shall have more to say hereafter, were all secondary beings when the barber was by.

It is not right or proper for these gentlemen,” urged the nawab, “to enter into the presence with their shoes and boots on. We never do. Your majesty is somewhat over-condescending, in allowing it. Believe me, your majesty’s august father, of happy memory, Ghazi-u-deen Hyder, the great and magnificent, would never have suffered it.”

The king was taken aback for a moment at this.

bold speech from one usually so humble and so pliant ; but Rooshun-u-Dowlah had screwed his courage to the speaking-point, and was not to be answered with a look.

“ Am I a greater man than the King of England, nawab ? ” asked his majesty.

“ Your majesty is the greatest king in India,—greater than the Emperor of Delhi. May the asylum of the world live a thousand years ! ” Such was the wily courtier’s evasive answer.

“ Rooshun-u-Dowlah,” said the king, “ am I a greater man than the King of England ? ”

“ It is not for your majesty’s servant to say that any one is greater than his lord.”

“ Listen to me, nawab ; and you, general, listen to me. The King of England is my master ; and these gentlemen would go into his presence with their shoes on. Shall they not come into mine, then ? Do they come before me with their hats on ? Answer me, your excellency.”

“ They do not, your majesty.”

“ No ; that is *their* way of showing respect. *They* take off their hats, and *you* take off your shoes. But, come now, let us have a bargain. Wallah, but I will get them to take off their shoes and leave them without, as you do, if you will take off your turban and leave it without, as they do.”

The nawab never said a word more on the subject. He was silenced. The loss of the turban is the

greatest of indignities amongst Mussulmans. "May my father's head be uncovered, if I do!" is no uncommon asseveration with them when urged to perform what they will not, or when anxious to show that the commission of an action is far from their thoughts.

The above conversation, which surprised us all so much that the king got his secretary to make a note of it—for everything done at court is chronicled—will show that the king was no fool when he allowed his judgment and his reason to guide him. It was only when governed by foolish whim or drunken caprice that he was childish and absurd—his draughts-playing and billiard-playing notwithstanding.

I have exhibited him now under several different aspects; and in the following pages he will play many more parts, good and bad. Before I conclude this chapter, however, I must give the reader a peep at two other royal sports—leap-frog and snow-balling.

We were in a large walled-in garden at Chaungunge, one of the park palaces where animal fights often took place. The garden might have been some three or four acres in extent, and was surrounded with a high wall. No native attendant was admitted into it when we were there with the king. Some one had been describing the game of leap-frog to his majesty, or else he had seen some pictures of it,

and it had taken his fancy mightily. The natives had been left, as usual, without the garden, the heavy gates were swung to, and majesty commanded that we should forthwith begin. The captain of the body-guard "made a back" for the tutor, the librarian stood for the portrait-painter. Away we went, like school-boys, beginning with very "low backs," for none of us was very expert in the game, but gradually "making backs" higher and higher. Tutor, barber, captain, librarian, portrait-painter—off we went like overgrown school-boys, now up, now down. It was hot work, I assure you.

The-king, however, did not long stand a quiet spectator of the scene; he would try too. His majesty was very thin, and not over strong. I happened to be nearest him at the time; and he ran towards me, calling out. I "made a back" for him, and he went over easily enough. He was very light, and a good horseman, so that he succeeded in the vault: he then stood for me. I would have given a good deal to have been excused; but he would not have it so, and to have refused would have been mortally to have offended him.

I ran, vaulted, down went the back, down I went with it; and his majesty the king and the author of these reminiscences went rolling together amongst the flower-beds. He got up annoyed—

"*Boppery bopp*, but you are as heavy as an elephant!" he exclaimed.

I was afraid he would have been in a passion ; but he was not. The barber adroitly made a back for him forthwith, and over he went blithely. The lightest of our party was not far off, and the king made a back for him, and succeeded in getting him safely over. It was then all right. Away they went, vaulting and standing, round and round, until majesty was tired out, and wanted iced claret to cool him. The game was frequently renewed afterwards.

But the snowballing ? asks some impatient reader. Well, I am coming to it.

It was about Christmas time. Christmas is called in India the great day of the sahebs ; and we were conversing about it in this very garden of Chaungunge, where the leap-frog had been first tried.

Christmas sports led to a description of what winter was ; winter led to snow ; snow to snowballing. We described to his majesty the art and pastime of snowballing as well as we could. To a man who had never seen snow, it was not very easy to describe it vividly.

The garden abounded with a large yellow flower, the African marygold, the smaller varieties of which are used to ornament houses in Calcutta, at Christmas-time. It was not quite so large as a dahlia, but *somewhat* similar in form and appearance. When *snow-balling* had been described to the king as well as we could describe it, he pulled three or four of these

yellow flowers, and threw them at the librarian, who happened to be the most distant of the party. Like good courtiers, all followed the royal example ; and soon every one was pelting right and left. These yellow flowers were our snowballs, and we all entered into the game with hearty good-will. The king bore his share in the combat right royally, discharging three missiles for one that was aimed at him. He laughed and enjoyed the sport amazingly. Before we had concluded, we were all a mass of yellow leaves : they stuck about in our hair and clothes, and on the king's hat, in a tenacious way. What the gardeners must have thought of the matter, when they came to set the garden to rights again, we did not stop to conjecture. It was enough that the king was amused. He had found out a new pleasure, and enjoyed it as long as those yellow flowers continued in bloom.

CHAPTER III.

THE HUNTING PARTY.

A practical joke—The deserted palace—The encampment—The wild fowl—Royal shooting—The trained hawks—March forward—Hawking—Trained stags—The cheetah—The chase.

THE conversation having once turned at the king's table upon hunting and shooting, some one remarked that there was excellent sport to be obtained at a *jheel* or small lake only a few miles from Lucknow. The king was in a good and pleasant humour at the time, and remarked,—

“ I have heard of that *jheel* ; let us go there and have some shooting. I want to see if I have any real sportmen about me.” Orders were given forthwith ; and it was determined that we should meet at one of the palaces in the immediate neighbourhood of the sheet of water on the following day.

This palace, *Dil-kushar* (heart's-delight), by name, was only a few miles from the walls of the town ;* so that in making our way thither, we

* The following curious passage is from the *Ferhenghi Refa'at*, a Persian educational work published in Lucknow, in Ghazi-udeen's time. “ If the prophet Enoch had seen the royal gardens in the neighbourhood of Lucknow, he would never have wished to go to Paradise, but would, without doubt, have said, ‘ These are better.’ ” Such is Oriental flattery !

expected, of course, to return as usual in the evening, and therefore made no arrangements for passing the night there. When we arrived, the king and his native retinue were already at *Dil-kushar*. We expected the summons to attend his majesty to the *jheel*; but no such summons came. Wondering at the delay, we found the day gradually wearing away, and evening approaching; we amused ourselves with billiards in the mean time.

At the usual hour in the evening, about nine o'clock, we were summoned to dinner; and found his majesty, according to his wont, ready to do his part at the table in the eating and drinking line, particularly in the latter. No one liked to ask him why nothing had been said about the shooting, and he did not refer to the subject; so that, with the usual amount of toast-giving and drinking, and the usual dancing and singing, the night wore away.

It might have been about midnight. The king was gradually becoming affected by the quantity of wine he had taken. We were looking forward to his being assisted into the harem, and to our release, when he suddenly burst out laughing. There was no apparent cause for the laughter, and so we waited till he explained himself.

"It won't do to leave me here alone," said he at length; "this is a stupid place. You are married, and you"—(nodding to the barber and another member of our party)—"you may go home, of course. 1

don't want to deprive your wives of your society for the night; but the rest must remain in attendance."

When we attended his majesty to any distance from Lucknow, we always took our beds with us—travelling-beds such as are ordinarily used in India—and with them our servants, our wardrobes, and dressing paraphernalia. Where a clean suit of clothes, from the stockings to the jacket, is required every day, a man cannot travel with a single carpet-bag in his hand.

It was evidently a pleasantry of his majesty, and we enjoyed it as best we could.

"However," said he again, "we must have the shooting to-morrow."

As soon as the king retired, which was not long after, our friends departed; and one of them promised to call at my house and order down my palanquin, in which I intended to pass the night, as I had done some fifty times before; he was also to send down my clothes for the ensuing day, and my native valet, or *bearer*, as he is called.

The king went off into the harem, laughing heartily as he went at the practical joke he was playing. We laughed too, as courtiers were bound to do.

"You can keep the nautch-girls to amuse you," said he. "Go on dancing; sing away for the *sahebs*," he continued gaily, as he passed by them.

It was a strange scene; our friends gone, and the

brilliantly-lighted hall—with its massive wax-candles on the table and its chandeliers and wall-shades—almost empty. The female attendants on the king, together with the servants, had disappeared: the nautch-girls still danced and sang; but when we thought the king was out of hearing, we dismissed them too; and there we sat, satiated with wine, longing only for retirement and rest. There was no great hardship, unquestionably, in being condemned to sit at a well-stocked table a little later than usual, with all kinds of fruits and the best wines procurable at our bidding—no great hardship unquestionably. Yet it was with an undefined uneasy sensation we glanced round the deserted apartment, which was about fifty feet long. We hardly spoke above our breath; as to drinking, we had too keen a remembrance of previous morning headaches to indulge much more.

At length we rose from the table, and wandered about the house. It was all open to us except the sleeping-apartments, before which, as usual, the native female sepoys, with muskets at their shoulders, paced noiselessly. All was silent and deserted-looking; a native servant here and there, with his clothes wrapped round him, head, feet, and all bandaged up as it were, lay on a mat asleep, not to be awoken by ten times as much noise as we made.

It was now about two o'clock, and our servants had not yet arrived; so taking possession, one of

couch and another of an easy-chair, we resigned ourselves to the musquitoes and to sleep. The large wax-candles burned on the table near ; and the only sound to be heard was the snoring of some lusty sleeper, the monotonous pacing of the sentinels, and the servants in the dining-room extinguishing the lamps.

I had hardly composed myself to sleep, however, when my palanquin was borne into a room adjoining,—a small empty room, which would not be defiled by our occupying it. My companions were soon similarly provided, our servants making us comfortable enough ; and in a few minutes we forgot the king's pleasantries and our position in a sound sleep.

The next day passed as the preceding. A servant told us occasionally that the king had inquired for us,—a hint that we were not to leave. The barber was in attendance to dress his hair as usual about twelve o'clock. We amused ourselves in the palace as best we could, now pacing up and down the verandahs with a cigar, now playing a game of billiards, and anon inspecting some article of oriental *virtù* that ornamented some of the rooms. It was evident the king was determined we should not leave ; but not a word was said of the shooting, no preparation whatever was made for departing to the lake where we had been assured the wild-fowl congregated in thousands.

Dinner passed as before, the king again remarking

that he could not be left alone in such a dull place, and that the following day we must go off to the lake. We slept as before in our palanquins, sending off our *bearers* to provide clothes for the following day. Suspecting, however, that the king intended remaining some time, either at the palace in which we then were, or at an encampment that had been prepared near the lake, I ordered down at once my bed, and usual travelling companions in the way of boxes and stores. I would be prepared for all contingencies, at all events. A little inquiry amongst the native attendants had elicited the fact that the king was very much pleased with some new addition to his harem, some fascinating little beauty of tender years whom we had first seen on reaching Dil-kushar a day or two previously. It was a new toy, to be played with for a few days and then discarded ; just as younger children amuse themselves with a rattle to-day, and with a jack-in-the-box to-morrow.

I was fully prepared therefore for the week's attendance required of us at this out-of-the-way place. At the end of that time we set forward to the lake. The king had made it a personal request, that we should not visit it until we all travelled together. We were surprised and delighted, on first obtaining a sight of the lake, with the extent of the preparations made for our party. The ground sloped *upwards from the water's edge on the side whence we approached*, so that we caught no glimpse of it until

we had crested the little hill on the side of which we were travelling.

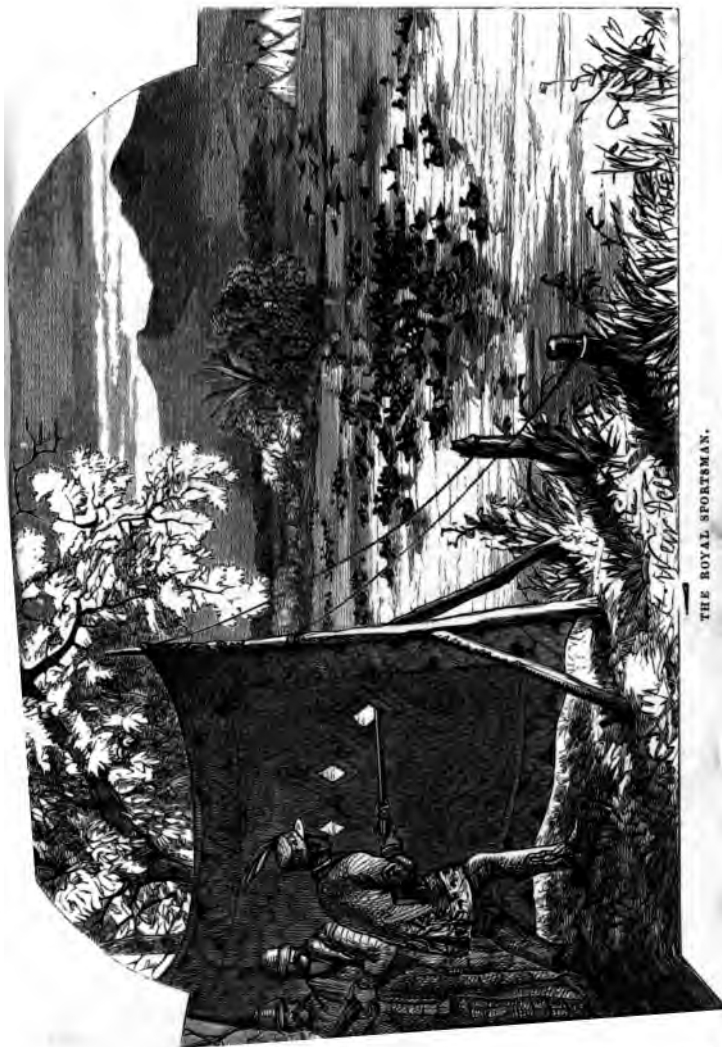
The lake was spread out before us, shining in the red lurid light of the setting sun. It might have been two miles long by one in breadth. Thick forest grew on all sides of it, except on that by which we drew near—thick forest down to the very water's edge, in many places overhanging the water gracefully. On the side whence we approached, a grassy bank opened round a little bay, sloping upwards gradually to the summit on which we stood. Round this miniature bay stretched the encampment, the king's tent in the centre,—a highly decorated marquee, conspicuous from the crimson lines which ornamented it, and the triangular green flags. The tents for the ladies of the king's household and suite—his wives and their attendants, the female sepoys and bearers, the dancing and singing girls, and servants—were situated behind the marquee. The resident was to honour the expedition with his presence, and a handsomely-decorated tent had been prepared for him on the right of the king's. On the other side, at some distance, a square tent was pitched for us, the European members of the household. These were not all, however; there were tents also for the nawab, or native prime minister, for his son the commander-in-chief, for the general at the head of the police, and other officers, many of them with numerous attendants. Amongst all this little

canvas town were elephants picqueted about, horses and camels; howdahs here and palanquins there, together with all the variety of conveyances used by the superior native females.

The king had been determined to surprise us; and he succeeded. He was delighted at the admiration which we expressed; honest admiration it was too, for a more brilliant or a finer scene it would not be easy to imagine. We did not ask him, of course, what was the use of it all. We did not remark that the lake was within easy visiting distance of Lucknow, and that it might easily have been journeyed to in the morning, our sport continued during the day, and we ourselves sleep, or, if need were, dine, each in his own house, in Lucknow the same evening. These were considerations not for us to bring forward. We admired the lake, and the beautiful scenery round it—we admired the encampment and its varied oriental aspect—and we expressed our admiration. He was content, and we anticipated enjoyment.

We soon found, however, that sporting with a king in company was a different thing from sporting with ordinary unanointed men. He was to have all the sport to himself, and for several days he had it all to himself. A screen was put up on the shore in front of the little bay I have already mentioned. The object of the screen was to prevent the king *from being seen by the wild fowl when he fired on them.* They were enticed in great numbers to the

waters of the little bay by parched corn and rice scattered plentifully on its surface. When they had collected in hundreds, if not in thousands, on the surface of the water, the encampment being kept as still as possible, the king was informed all was ready. He came down to the screen noiselessly, an attendant carrying his Joe Manton. A hole had been properly prepared, in which the king inserted the end of Joe's muzzle. The birds swam about and picked up the corn, fighting and screaming and fluttering here and there, intent on their occupation,—not for a moment thinking of majesty and Manton. Blaze went the gun: the king himself had fired,—a feat for accomplishing which he regarded himself as no little of a sportsman. The shot pattered in like hail amongst the birds, a good deal going harmlessly over them; for his majesty was nothing of a marksman. With loud cries the birds rose forthwith into the air, first to gyrate in clouds in a confused way overhead, and then to disappear in the forests. The attendants rushed into the water to secure the wounded and the dead. They brought out double as many as the king had injured, and made a little pile of them before the delighted “refuge of the world.” Double as many! you exclaim, good reader—double as many as the king had injured! Yes, double as many at least; for, had the king not hit one, they would have brought out a goodly supply, which, of course, they also took



THE ROYAL SPORTSMAN.



in with them. It was the interest of all to keep his majesty in good humour ; so the attendants were provided with birds recently brought in from the adjoining district. When they were in the water, standing up to their arm-pits in it, it was easy to untie the birds they had concealed about their persons ; and who was to say, when they emerged from the lake, that all these had not been shot by his majesty and Joe Manton ? Who indeed ? Not I, I assure the reader. The thousand rupees I drew from his majesty's treasury monthly were of too much consequence to me to permit of my hinting such a thing.

This kind of sport continued for three or four days. The resident and his party, however, arrived at the end of that time, and then the king had it no longer all to himself. The resident's friends shot, and we shot ; boats were procured, and we went out in them over the lake, enjoying excellent sport. The trained hawks were now brought into requisition, and marvellous it was to see the instinct with which they seconded the efforts of their trainers. The ordinary hawking of the heron we had at a later period of this expedition ; but the use now made of the animal was altogether different, and displayed infinitely more sagacity than one would suppose likely to be possessed by such an animal. *These hawks were trained especially for the purpose for which they were now employed.* A flight of birds—

thousands of birds—were enticed upon the water as before, by scattering corn over it. The hawks were then let fly, four or five of them. We made our appearance openly upon the banks, and in boats from concealed creeks, guns in hand, and the living swarm of birds rose at once into the air. The hawks circled above them however, in a rapid revolving flight, and they dared not ascend high. Thus was our prey retained fluttering in mid-air, until hundreds had paid the penalty with their lives—the penalty of fear and sagacity, fear on their part, sagacity on that of the hawk. Only picture in your mind's eye the circling hawks above, gyrating monotonously, the fluttering captives in mid-air, darting now here, now there, to escape, and still, coward-like, huddling together, with the motley group of sportsmen on the bank and in the boats,—and you have the whole scene before you at once.

Nothing could be more delightful than the bustling activity which pervaded our camp, as every day brought with it some new amusement ; but unfortunately the king was by no means in the same excellent humour as before: his majesty was annoyed to find himself a secondary sort of personage ;—as a sportsman, it may be easily imagined that the rank he took was not of the highest.

To us of the household, obliged to be constantly in attendance on the king, his ill-humour was a source of considerable annoyance ; and he was soon induced

to think of proceeding further into the country in pursuit of larger game. Yet it was not without regret that we left the picturesque lake and the well-appointed encampment on its banks. The boat-excursions over the water were delightful. It was a pleasant thing to be rowing away amid the wooded banks and by the sides of the overhanging foliage, now catching a glimpse, now losing it again, of the varied scene upon the rising ground, which was covered with the tents, the beasts of burden, the body-guards, and the motley people ; it was a pleasant thing to come suddenly upon some startled heron, as we opened up a little creek, to hear the bird scream out its disapprobation of our intrusion, flap its large wings energetically in the endeavour to rise, and then to see it falling helpless, brought down by a well-directed bullet ; it was a pleasant thing to see the groups of smaller wild fowl winging their flight away long ere we came near them—some bigger and bolder fellow remaining to the last intent upon his fishing, remaining too often only to share the fate he intended for his tiny prey, by becoming the prey of a larger animal in his turn.

Nothing more beautiful than the sun setting amid such a scene can be conceived. Whilst the red sky was reflected brilliantly in the waters beneath, and the red sunbeams tinged the foliage of the trees with a *brilliant border*, devout Mussulmans might be seen *on the open bank in the neighbourhood of the*

encampment, engaged in the *muggreeb* or evening prayer, their figures distinctly seen in the waters beneath, as they kissed the ground, and bent the body, and knelt upon their little mats. Over them, too, the lurid beams of the sun exerted a gilding influence; and whether dressed in the gaudy uniform of the body-guard, or in the more sober sepoy dress, or in the scanty costume of the labouring natives, still all was hallowed and illuminated, and rendered picturesque by the red sunlight. The cries of the birds, and of the monkeys, as they composed themselves in the forest, or called to each other with chirps or screams, harmonized well with the scene. The elephants stood upon the banks in silence, the camels lay in silence chewing the cud, with their bending necks moving gracefully as they brought up the balls of food into their mouths; the horses too ate their evening meal in silence, picqueted about here and there, whilst some tiny bird and the still tinier insects filled the whole air with their noisy declamation. It is so in human life; it is not the most useful part of mankind that makes the most noise in the world, but, generally speaking, that portion which is fondest of noisy talk and can declaim most loudly.

It was no difficult matter to induce the king to proceed farther into the interior of the country. He had been so well satisfied with his own exploits in the way of wild-fowl shooting before the arrival of

the resident and his party, that he determined upon having other and more dangerous sport.

“ We shall have deer-shooting, pig-sticking, and tiger-hunting,” said he, in a moment of enthusiasm, “ before we return to Lucknow.”

The encampment was broken up, and we journeyed northwards, in order to gain a part of the country where the wild boar and hog were to be met with. Considering the extent of the attendance upon the king, it may be readily conceived that our progress was far indeed from being a rapid one. The trained stags, used as decoys, were brought with us ; the hawks, for we were to have hawking too ; the cheetahs, a species of leopard trained to hunt the deer,—these came in waggons with their keepers and attendants. There was the king’s harem, of course, containing his wives, his numerous concubines, and the dancing and singing girls, their servants and their attendant female sepoys, forming a little army of covered conveyances in themselves ; there was the body-guard, in its flaunting livery of blue and silver ; there were elephants bearing tents and baggage ; camels, some for riding, used chiefly by messengers, and some employed as beasts of burden ; together with horses in abundance. When to all this is added *our* train, consisting of elephants, horses, and palanquins, it may be easily conceived that our advance *was more like the march of an Indian army than the progress of a simple hunting-party.*

The villagers living along the route by which we journeyed were thrown into consternation by our appearance. The king and his retinue had never made their way into this part of the country before ; and the march of an Eastern sovereign through his dominions is a sad thing for the people. The king's servants regard themselves as a privileged race. They have a right, they think, to the best of everything, and to as much of it as they please ; so that the plundering and maltreating of the unfortunate inhabitants went on upon all sides. Besides this, was any difficulty to be surmounted, any impassable road to be made practicable, or a new road to be made where road there never had been before, the villagers far and near were turned out to do it ; —men and women and children all turned out to work as long as the nawab liked, their only pay the abuse and punishment they received if the work were not done as speedily as the nawab wished. People in England may possibly think such a state of things impossible ; people in India who have visited the territories of any native prince must be aware that it is literally true.

At length we came to another lake, forty or fifty miles from that which we had left in the neighbourhood of Lucknow. It was more than twice the extent of the former one, and was altogether wilder in aspect. The snowy range of the Himalayas had gradually been becoming more and more distinct as

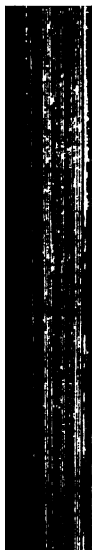
we journeyed northwards ; the country, too, was generally more hilly, and larger patches of jungle and forest alternated with the cultivated land. For several miles there had been no road but that hastily constructed by the nawab's orders in time for the passage of our vast and heterogeneous company. Right over rice-fields, and through forests, and across valuable meadows of Indian corn, was the road constructed ; the destruction of property a secondary consideration, the comfort of the king and his retinue being of primary importance.

The encampment was formed at some distance from the lake, much in the same order and with the same arrangement as before. The resident, however, was not with us — his tents and retinue were wanting. The king went out shooting as before ; but the marshy character of the banks rendered it by no means so pleasant for him as it was at the other lake. Herons abounded in the neighbourhood, and the hawks were brought forward. For several days we enjoyed keenly this delightful sport. None of us, except the king, had seen hawking before in its perfection. The flight of the bird when released ; his swooping round and round in the air, slowly at first, then more rapidly ; the sight gained of the rising heron, and the hawk's instant flight upwards to overtop the fugitive ; the anxious watching for the result, as the pursuer *gradually gained the desired position right above his*

prey ; the instant dart downwards, like a lightning-flash, whilst beak and claws were buried simultaneously in the heron's back ; and then the twirling tumble of both birds as they fell, turning round and round rapidly in their fall ;—all this was worth gazing at,—all this was a scene not to be easily forgotten when once witnessed. But this was not all. No sooner was the blow struck than we dashed off on horseback to witness the fall. Quiet elderly gentlemen, much given to port and portliness, might then be seen scampering over the country in an eminently reckless way—over a difficult wild country too, as if fleeing from destruction behind, instead of being impelled simply by curiosity forwards. Every one was anxious to be in at the death—to witness the hawk extricated from his prey, both birds perhaps bruised and wounded with the fall. It was a pleasant thing to see the care with which the attendants inspected the feathery warrior, to see what injury he had received ; it was interesting, too, to see the eagerness with which, in spite of any amount of injury, the hawk seized his dainty morsel of the prey. The king was a good horseman, and enjoyed the sport as much as any.

In his majesty's large tent we enjoyed our dinners as usual after these sports daily, everything being at the table exactly as in Lucknow ; there was no want of anything but moderation in the use of wine, to render these dinners generally comfortable enough. The well-





cooked viands, the spacious dining-table, the large wax-candles, the gaudy china and valuable plate, the dancing-girls and the female attendants, with their fans of the peacock's-tail,—all were here exactly as though we had been in the palace in Lucknow, instead of being on the shores of a wild lake, with forest and jungle around us, fifty miles away from it.

The wild boar and the hog were not to be found in the neighbourhood, however, nor the tiger ; so that for the " pig-sticking " and the tiger-hunting we were to advance, after a time, farther north. Deer, however, abounded in the forest ; and it was determined that we should have three varieties of deer-stalking. In the first place, the trained stags were to be employed ; secondly, the cheetahs ; and thirdly, we were to have a regular hunt on horseback and on foot. Such was the programme of the amusements for the ensuing week. The king began to get tired of the daily hawking and wild-fowl shooting.

I have never heard of trained stags being so employed elsewhere as I saw them employed in Oude ; I shall therefore be a little more minute in my description of this sport. Hawking and wild-fowl shooting are pretty much the same all the world over ; but the decoy-stags were a novelty to me.

In our rides in the neighbourhood of the lake, near which we were encamped, we lighted upon a *fine open country* adjoining a forest, which would *answer admirably* for the purpose. The adjoining

wood was full of the smaller game of Oude, or, if not smaller, at all events the more harmless, amongst which the wild deer must be classed as one. Skilful beaters were sent off into the forest to drive the deer, as if unintentionally,—that is without violence or making much noise,—towards the point of the forest adjoining the open space I have just mentioned. Here, protected by its watching guardians, the most warlike and powerful of its males, the herd was congregated together in apparent safety.

We had about a dozen trained stags, all males, with us. These, well acquainted with the object for which they were sent forwards, advanced at a gentle trot over the open ground towards the skirt of the wood. They were observed at once by the watchers of the herd, and the boldest of the wild animals advanced to meet them. Whether the intention was to welcome them peacefully, or to do battle for their pasturage, I cannot tell; but in a few minutes the two parties were engaged in a furious contest. Head to head, antlers to antlers, the tame deer and the wild fought with great fury. Each of the tame animals, every one of them large and formidable, was closely engaged in contest with a wild adversary, standing chiefly on the defensive, not in any feigned battle or mimicry of war, but in a hard-fought combat. We now made our appearance in the open ground on horseback, advancing towards the scene of conflict. The deer on the skirts of the wood, seeing

us, took to flight ; but those actually engaged maintained their ground and continued the contest.

In the mean time a party of native huntsmen, sent for the purpose, gradually drew near to the wild stags, getting in between them and the forest. What their object was, we were not at the time aware ; in truth, it was not one that we could have approved or encouraged. They made their way into the rear of the wild stags, which were still combating too fiercely to mind them ; they approached the animals, and with a skilful cut of their long knives the poor warriors fell hamstrung. We felt pity for the noble animals, as we saw them fall helplessly on the ground, unable longer to continue the contest, and pushed down, of course, by the decoy-stags. Once down, they were unable to rise again.

The tame ones were called off in a moment ; not one of them pursued his victory. Their work was done ; they obeyed the call of their keepers almost at once, and were led off like hounds, some of them bearing evidence in their gored chests that the contest in which they had been engaged was no sham, but a reality. As we rode up, we saw them led off triumphantly, capering over the ground, as if proud of their exploits, tossing their fine-spreading antlers about joyously, and sometimes looking as if they would enjoy a little more fighting—this time with *each other*. The contrast presented by the *over-thrown wild animals* was a pitiable one. There was

no boisterous energy about them, no jumping and tossing of the head, no prancing or curvetting. All the energy of the noble beasts was concentrated in their eyes. As they lay, some upon their sides, some upon their bellies, they watched us with their large black eyes intently. Incapable of further action, the faint glimmering of soul which they possessed shone fully in their fixed eyeballs. It was as if reproaching us that they looked thus full into our faces, as we rode from one to the other—conquered warriors, and hardly conquered by fair means; nay, certainly not conquered by fair means—it was simple butchery, that ham-stringing. When a whole field—men and horses and dogs—turns out in England to course after an unfortunate hare, one feels pity for the animal. The disproportion between the means and the end strikes every one at once. Yet I never felt so much pity for the hare under such circumstances—not even when I saw it torn to pieces by badly-trained dogs—as I felt for the mute, large-eyed, noble stags, as they lay there, looking reproachfully at us. The fact was, I was too soft-hearted for an Oude sportsman. The signal was given by the king, and the throats of the poor animals were cut. It was the only thing that could be done with them. To have preserved their lives, or carried *them* off in that helpless state, would have been wanton cruelty.

This was the only use I saw made of the decoy-

stags ; but I was informed they are also similarly used when the intention is, not to destroy their adversaries, but to take them alive and uninjured. Two men then advanced towards each of the wild animals with a strong net,—they advance from behind as usual,—the net is skilfully thrown over the head of the stag, and he is upset by a sudden jerk. Should he not be upset, but turn upon his assailants, the lives of the men are in danger—in imminent danger. Another difficulty in the matter is, to avoid entangling the antlers of the tame stag in the net as well. As long as the two animals are locked together, head to head, antler in antler, of course the net cannot be thrown successfully. It is only when both animals have retired a little to make another rush forwards, that the desired opportunity is afforded.

The trained leopard, called the cheetah, was also brought up during our stay at this encampment to hunt the deer. Cheetahs are too commonly seen in the zoological collections in Europe now-a-days, to render a description of the animal necessary. They differ from the common leopard chiefly in the form of the head, which is smaller and uglier, and in the spots on the skin, which are lighter and less varied. The cheetah is a taller and more powerful beast than the ordinary leopard. I have heard of their making *their way, when very much in want of food, into the villages of Ceylon, and carrying off old men and*

women, or children. It is true, one naturally feels a little doubtful about Ceylonese accounts of wild animals, after the wonderful stories recorded by sportsmen who have been much in that favoured island ; but looking only at the size and strength of the animal, I see no reason to doubt the fact, although in northern India such things do not occur. The tigers, perhaps, keep the smaller fry in order there, and reserve all the human hunting to themselves.

The conducting of the cheetah from his cage to the chase is by no means an easy matter. The keeper leads him along as he would a large dog, with a chain ; and for a time, as they scamper over the country, the cheetah goes willingly enough ; but if anything arrests his attention, some noise from the forest, some scented trail upon the ground, he moves more slowly, throws his head aloft, and peers savagely around. A few more minutes, perhaps, and he would be unmanageable. The keeper, however, is prepared for the emergency. He holds in his left hand a cocoa-nut shell, sprinkled on the inside with salt ; and, by means of a handle affixed to the shell, he puts it at once over the nose of the cheetah. The animal licks the salt, loses the scent, forgets the object which arrested his attention, and is led quietly along again. As often as symptoms of excitement are exhibited, so often is the cocoa-nut shell applied to the nose ; and

after each application the cheetah is docile and manageable.*

The race which takes place when the cheetah and his keeper have stolen unobserved within a moderate distance of the prey, is one of the most interesting and exciting kind. The deer is flying for his life ; and bounds straight forward over everything that would impede his progress, jumping, running, wading, swimming by turns, with frantic energy. On the other hand, the cheetah's blood is up. He is no laggard. The deer is his natural prey. How he leaps high over all obstacles ; how he bounds, cat-like, over the bushes, and even takes to the water rather than lose the fugitive, are things, once seen, to be remembered for many years. Nor is the part of the horseman an easy one. With all the care that had been taken to enable his majesty to get an excellent view of the hunt ; with all the care that

* " If he (Hyder Ali) has leisure, he appears at a balcony, and receives the salute of his elephants. When the prince appears, his officers cry out, 'Your elephants salute your majesty,' and, at the same time, those animals, ranged in a semi-circle round the palace, make three genuflections. His tigers of chase (cheetahs) likewise pay him a visit. They are led by hand, and are covered with a mantle of green and gold hanging to the ground, and a bonnet on their head, of cloth embroidered with gold, with which their eyes can be immediately covered, if they should chance to prove mischievous. Hyder himself gives each of them a ball of sweetmeats, which they take very adroitly with their paws, being exceedingly tame." *The History of Hyder Shah*, published by his grandson, Prince Gholam Mohammed, when in England, in 1855.

had been taken to select a suitable part of the country, and to remove obstacles,—it was still by no means an easy task to keep up. We were well mounted on horses that entered keenly into the spirit of the chase, and kept their eyes, as we kept ours, fixed now upon the flying deer, now upon the pursuing cheetah ; and yet it was a difficult task to keep the chase in sight, particularly over the stubbly grass and marshy ground. There was evidently no royal road to the enjoyment of hunting, however, and his majesty and his suite were fain to be content. Helter-skelter we dashed along, keeping well together—for the king would never have forgiven us had we outridden him—now by the side of an ugly *nullah*, or bed of a stream, at this season dry ; now over the long wiry grass, that grew in tufts, affording most insecure footing to the horses as they dashed forwards,—the cheetah seemed to skim over it without requiring footing at all ; at another time we found ourselves in an open space covered with a sort of scrubby brushwood, not more than two or three feet high ; the horses dashed on, however, regardless of the want of road, now finding an opening to the right, now to the left, until we left the brushwood behind.

At length the deer was fairly run down. The forest was near ; and if that were once attained, we felt convinced that the chase was over, as far as we were concerned ; for no horse could penetrate through



W. H. W. H.

W. H. W. H.



the thick under-growth of a tropical forest. The deer never gained it, however. Worn out with the long pursuit, and paralyzed with fear at the indefatigable pursuit of its bloodthirsty foe, the poor animal leaped head-foremost into a little thicket, fancying, apparently, it was the beginning of the forest. Its branching horns were caught for a moment in the creepers; and just as it had extricated them, and was bounding forwards again, the cheetah was upon it.

His majesty was well satisfied, for he was in at the death; and having heard from us of the fox's brush, and the anxiety to secure it amongst sportsmen, had the tail of the deer fixed triumphantly in his hunting-cap.

CHAPTER IV.

TIT FOR TAT.

Geological problem—Royal inconvenience—Cruelty in a Hindu zenanah—Thunder-storm—Disturbance in the camp—Plunder—Keeping guard—The thief—Confusion—The barber—A friend in need—Return to Lucknow—Summary justice.

WE were at this period encamped to the north of a village called Misrik,—a few miles only to the north of it,—between the Goomty and one of its tributaries, the Kutheny. One of the expeditions that took us farthest from the encampment,—whether an extraordinary run of the cheetah, or a journey in search of a herd of deer, I do not remember which,—brought us upon the borders of a small sheet of water, the shores of which were covered with a fine impalpable white sand, resembling, in its acrid taste and smarting pungency, as well as in its appearance, finely-powdered saltpetre.

This deposit has been the subject of much interesting speculation amongst Indian geologists, and of not a little controversy. I do not pretend to be a scientific man, and therefore I feel bound to believe the evidence of my senses. Those, therefore, who assure me that this is nothing but fine sand, similar to what is found sometimes upon the sea-shore, only a little whiter in colour, ask me to believe what I

have a very vivid recollection of my senses having refused to credit at the time. The water of the jheel or little lake was brackish, as might have been expected ; and as we rode over the white powder, at first rapidly, but after a little more leisurely, clouds of the dust were raised into the air, and diffused themselves round and about us, as if they were no heavier than the atmosphere. There was fortunately no wind blowing at the time ; had there been, we should probably have been blinded. As it was, our eyes and nostrils and mouths and ears were filled with the bitter smarting powder, each particle apparently, although too minute for vision, being large enough and acrid enough to leave a stinging sensation behind it, when it had made its way into the nostrils. Our horses felt the effect of the saltpetre shower as much as we did, and snorted and sneezed vehemently to get rid of its effects, wanting to turn at every step to the water, which was unfit for them to drink.

This uncomfortable ride was the beginning of the end of our memorable hunting expedition. The powdered saltpetre—as I must persist in calling it until I am supplied with a better name—insinuated itself with as little ceremony into the royal nostrils and eyes as into our more plebeian organs ; and his majesty swore at it in excellent Hindustani and clipped English with an energy that one would *hardly believe him capable of*. It was amusing to *hear one scientific member of our party assuring us*

that a more interesting geological phenomenon it would be impossible to discover anywhere ; that we were lucky in meeting thus accidentally with a deposit which the *sarans* of Europe would travel far to inspect. We sneezed, and coughed, and rubbed our eyes, and listened to him. The greater number of us had indeed shut our eyes as soon as the smarting pain had been first felt ; but still the dust insinuated itself between the closed eyelids in an eminently pertinacious sort of way, and we began to fear at length for the eyesight of our horses.

“ What could be easier than to have retraced your steps when the inconvenience was first discovered ? ” asks some one wise in his generation. From what I have already said, no one fancies for a moment, I am sure, that we continued to ride over this powdered saltpetre from any affection for it, from any devotion to science, or any earnest desire to make ourselves martyrs in its pursuit : we were as anxious to escape from this sea of impalpable dust as a London alderman is to get rid of annoyance after dinner, and compose himself to a soothing nap. But then, how was it to be done ? We did not come upon this “ interesting deposit ” all at once. No one could say where it began, and where it ended. We had made our way into its midst gradually, crossing a little patch here, and then a little patch there, finding it here mixed up with earth, and there neutralized by a heavy loamy soil that would not let it rise. By

the time we had reached the position in which our horses' hoofs turned it up in clouds all around and about us, we were in its midst, and it appeared shorter to go through to the opposite side than to turn and retrace our steps.

That evening, on regaining our tents, we prepared as usual for the royal dinner-party. His majesty had not yet recovered from the annoyance he felt; the powdered saltpetre still irritated his eyes and nostrils; he was uneasy, vexed, out of temper. We received scant courtesy from him that evening; nor could the buffoonery of the barber, or the most spirited sallies of the court-jesters, or the dancing of the nautch-girls, restore the king to equanimity. He was annoyed at having been allowed to get into so unpleasant a position. He ought to have been informed of the inconvenience beforehand. Even the suggestion of our scientific friend, that the deposit might turn out to be a valuable mine—a suggestion which arrested his attention for a moment, but was totally forgotten afterwards—did not suffice to remove his irritation. The king retired into the female apartments at an unusually early hour, and we returned to our tents. Heaven help the poor woman who has the misfortune at such a moment to displease or disgust an irritated despot! an accidental sneeze,*

* *The punishment inflicted on a native in the court of Oude, for sneezing in the king's presence, was the loss of the offender's nose! This barbarism is by no means uncommon in Oriental courts.*

a louder cough than usual, nay, even an ungraceful movement, may bring down punishment terrible to think of; torture, perhaps, at the bare mention of which the English wife or mother or daughter would shudder. Such things take place but too often in the Hindu zenanahs of India. English magistrates know that such things often take place; but they are helpless to punish or prevent. The zenanah and the harem are sacred; and the female slave that revealed their more horrid mysteries would suffer a lingering and excruciating death at the hands of the very women whom her revelations might be intended to protect. The chief, and the wealthy man, who is disposed to be cruel, can act despotically, tyrannically enough; but the king, with unquestioned power of life and death in his hands, if once infuriated or enraged, can torture and kill without question. "My wife is about being confined," said a savage Hindu rajah to his European friend, a solicitor; "my wife is about being confined; and if she does not make me the father of a *son*, I will whip her to death with my hunting-whip." The child was born,—it was a daughter,—and the woman's body was burnt two days after. How she had died, no one out of the zenanah certainly knew. The fact of the threat only transpired long afterwards, when it was the interest of the solicitor to whom the remark had been made to prove the rajah mad in his later days, in order to set aside a will!

Up to this period of our hunting expedition the weather had been remarkably fine. We were awake, however, just after we had composed ourselves to sleep that evening, by a violent thunder-storm and a deluge of rain, the precursors of a changing monsoon. The lightnings flashed with a vivid intensity and a rapidity such as are seldom seen out of the tropics. As we lay in our large square tent, five of us, the thunder appeared to roll exactly over our heads, and not to be further distant than the top of the tent-poles ; whilst the lightning-flashes lit up the scene with their dancing zig-zag flights through the heavens and their sheet-like glare. Every two or three moments we could see, for an instant, as distinctly as possible, each object in the tent, together with the black outlines of the clouds outside, through our double canvas covering, for an instant only ; and then all was gloom again—deep, dark, impenetrable gloom.

It was just about midnight. Between the intervals of the thunder the wind whistled and howled without like a demon. Our tent heaved up and down, now bulging uneasily out here, and then rapidly collapsing again, the tent-poles quivering unsteadily as the canvas flapped-to. We felt convinced that the tent would come down ; and, all being awake, expressed our fears to that effect to *each other*. But we were mistaken. The servants *busied themselves putting in a pin here and bracing*

up a rope there, and all remained secure. It was evident, however, that there was great excitement in the camp. In the intervals of the thunder we could hear, besides the neighing of horses, and the crying of camels, and the blowing of elephants the shouts of men as they called to each other.

“Some of the animals have got loose,” said we to each other, when the rolling of the thunder and the howling of the wind would permit us to be heard.

At length the storm abated ; and still the commotion in the camp continued, nay, became ever louder and more loud.

“Several of the animals got loose,” said we to each other. “It is to be hoped the elephants will not get amongst the tent-ropes, or down the tents will come.”

With this benevolent wish, and an order to the servants to see that the loose animals did not disturb us, or approach our tent, we composed ourselves to sleep again.

It was past midnight. We were relapsing fast into unconsciousness ; for our tent was an excellent one, and the torrents of rain had incommoded us but little. I was in an easy dozing condition, half-awake, half-asleep, conscious and unconscious, enjoying the sense of security and comfort which my camp-couch afforded, when I contrasted the interior with the probable condition of the exterior of the

tent. Still the noise of the animals and the cries of men grew ever louder, and it was impossible to sleep.

“Go out, Buxoo,” said I to my valet, “and see what all the noise is about.”

Buxoo departed. Before he returned another servant was called by some one at the door of the tent, and we heard the announcement of “a messenger from ‘the support of the world,’” the oriental paraphrase for a king’s servant.

The message was for the captain of the guard, one of our party ; an order to present himself before the king with all convenient speed. This order roused us from our half-dreamy condition. Something of importance was evidently on foot to cause the worthy captain to be called up at such an hour. The messenger knew nothing, except that there was great commotion in the king’s quarters, and that one of the royal tents had been blown down. This in itself was food enough for thought. The nawab had the charge of the encampment ; could it be that the king was so enraged, that he determined to put the nawab under arrest, or worse, have him executed there and then ? Could it be that some frightful event had taken place in the zenanah, and a tumult had been the consequence ? Could it be—but there was no use in speculating.

My servant returned shortly after the captain’s departure with information that there was a general

movement in the king's quarters ; but either no one knew or no one would tell him why. He had even gone so far as to ask a jemadar, or native officer, what it was, and got struck in consequence.

This did not tend much to allay our curiosity. The rain was still falling, however, in floods, and none of us felt disposed to go out and seek information for ourselves. At length the captain returned again.

" Look out for your safety, gentlemen, and take care of your property—we are off."

" Off!—where?—who?" we asked in a breath.

" The king starts for Lucknow in half-an-hour—we must attend him, of course—the whole force—his wives travel with him. He seems terribly annoyed, and very anxious to return to the capital immediately. Look out for your property, I say, or the villagers will confiscate it." The captain ran on in this way, as he packed up and prepared, now ordering a servant, now giving one of his orderlies some package to take care of.

" Do you seriously think our property is in danger, captain?" I asked.

" Not if you defend it with spirit," was his cool reply ; " but of course the poor villagers, who have been plundered and maltreated by the king's servants, will rush in upon the encampment when they know the king and the guard are gone—that always happens."

It was impossible for us to travel with the king, we had not the requisite number of servants. Besides, it was the king's order that we should return with the nawab. Travelling fifty miles in a remote part of Oude is a very different thing from going over the same space of ground on a well-kept road in Europe. We had an elephant each, and one horse or more ; but covered vehicles, palanquins, were necessary for travelling in the day-time, and palanquins required relays of men all along the road to convey them. Besides, whatever baggage we did not take with us would certainly be lost ; if not plundered by the villagers, it would never escape the nawab's servants.

There was nothing for it, therefore, but quietly to await the morning, in order to see what force of men the nawab could allow us, and what was the best arrangement that could be made under the circumstances.

We heard the snorting of the horses, and the monotonous song of the labourers who carried the palanquins, and the heavy tramp of the elephants gradually dying away in the distance, as the king's party hurried off. There was no stopping, no delay. What his majesty wanted done, he must have that done at once.

The rain still pattered away upon the outside of our tent ; it was a bleak, dark, miserable night. Our lamp stood on a little table in the centre of our

tent, faintly illuminating the interior through the hazy vapour-laden air. We were stretched, four of us, upon our camp-beds, two at one side of the tent, and two at the other. Our palanquins stood at the doors—mine was inside, just across the door. We were not unmindful of the captain's warning ; and it had been decided that we should relieve each other in sitting up, one after the other, an hour at a time, until morning came. A pair of loaded pistols and a sword were placed upon the table ; and one of our little party, formerly an officer of dragoons in the Austrian service, and still bearing a warlike aspect from his huge mustachoes, took his place first at the table, cigar in mouth. Numerous servants were scattered about on the floor of the tent ; but they were not to be depended on ; besides, they had a wholesome fear of the villagers, whom the day before they would have abused and browbeaten like the fiercest of braggadocios.

Our military guard sat in such a position that he could easily inspect both doors ; and, with a dim recollection of having seen him stretching out his legs against the table, tilting back his chair, thrusting both his hands into the waistband of his *pyjamas* or sleeping drawers, and puffing vehemently at a superlative manilla,—one of the king's own you may be certain,—I fell off into a half-unconscious doze.

My couch was the nearest to the door on the left ; our guardian dragoon was sitting with his back to it,

and my native valet was snoring vigorously upon the ground, wrapped up like a bundle of dirty clothes, neither head nor feet visible, by the side of my couch. I fell off, I say, into a half-unconscious doze; but fortunately retained sufficient consciousness to perceive a stealthy crawling sound in my immediate neighbourhood. I opened my eyes without otherwise moving,—awake, wide awake, at once; and as I became so, I saw a dark brown arm rising as if from the earth, and seizing a bundle of clothes that rested upon a tin box in the corner near me. I had too strong a conviction that every particle of clean linen I possessed in the tent, and indeed nearly all the linen I had brought with me from Lucknow, was in that bundle, not to jump up at once and make a grasp at the long brown arm. It was gone, however, and with it the bundle, before I could seize it. Our military guard, hearing my exclamation, seized one of the pistols, and pointed it full at me as I sat on my knees, for an instant, watching the space between my couch and the doors; for I felt persuaded the robber had not yet had time to escape. It was all the work of a moment, of course. Our watch advanced pistol in hand—I leaped out of bed and seized a sword. The robber at the same instant glided like a snake from under my couch, and made a dart for the nearest door, that probably by which he had entered.

By this time all were awake, and sat up, making

inquiries and uttering alarmed exclamations. I have said that my palanquin was placed across one of the entrances to the tent ; the doors of it were open, and as the robber darted forwards along the ground, he saw that his only hope of safety was a vigorous jump through the palanquin. He attempted this, and executed it as a monkey would have done. As our military watch advanced, pistol in hand, he saw the dark form of the robber bolting through the conveyance, and he fired. I too caught a glimpse of the thief as I turned, after seizing a sword ; but only a glimpse,—just saw him gliding through. Fortunately one of the servants had very unceremoniously been occupying my palanquin, and started just as the thief leaped over him—started, and rolled out of the conveyance, and through the canvas door of the tent, out upon the wet ground outside, fancying the pistol had been fired at him for his impudence. He and the robber rolled together in the mud, each afraid of the other, each fancying he was attacked. The robber escaped, however, very soon, leaving the servant half-smothered in mud, and leaving behind him, too, my bundle of clean linen—clean no longer—soaking in a puddle hard by.

To those who have never travelled in a tropical country, it may appear that this was a slight misfortune. Had they experienced the comfort of a change of linen, and the discomfort of a want of it, when travelling with the thermometer between eighty-five

and ninety, shut in by forest and jungle from a breath of air, themselves steaming, the ground steaming, the vegetation steaming, and the elephant or horse, or human beasts of burden, steaming too, they would think differently. My valet was the first to find the lost bundle: I was thankful that it was found; but its condition turned my thankfulness into indignation. A yellowish-brown-mud, exceedingly soft and sloppy and insinuating, had made its way into every article of clothing it contained; and vehemently did I accuse the mustachioed watch of being the cause of my calamity, as I turned over piece after piece of foul linen. He laughed, and assured me that the fellow had not got off free, for he had lodged a ball in him. If this were true, he must have fired two from the same barrel; for I found a pistol-bullet sunk deeply into the frame of my palanquin in the morning. I did not fail to point it out to him; and he had the audacity to tell me, as he stroked his horse-hair-like beard, that he had observed that mark there several days before, and that he rather thought the bullet had been lodged there one night when I was asleep inside; all which, of course, was simply nonsense.

There was no more going to sleep that night. The villagers had soon discovered that the king was gone with the body-guard, and they now broke into the encampment. Through the long dark hours we heard the cries of men and the shrieks of women

resounding from the neighbourhood of the king's tents. The poorer portions of the female attendants had been unable to accompany the harem ; and they were now exposed to every wrong and injury at the hands of the outraged villagers. Tents were broken into and pillaged ; ornaments were torn from the hands and feet of the poor women ; boxes were broken open, and clothes seized belonging to the first ladies of the court. As for us, self-preservation is the primary law of nature. It was the nawab's duty, not ours, to protect the camp. We expected every moment an attack upon our own tent, and so we sat up prepared, one with his pistols, another with his gun, and a third with his sword, all looking fierce and resolute. We were reconnoitred doubtless by the plunderers, and they felt no desire to come to close quarters with us. But why not go out and try and save the women from outrage ? asks some indignant reader, with more enthusiasm than knowledge. I will answer the question. The women left behind were, for the most part, discarded concubines, dancing-girls disgraced, or poor attendants. Had we entered their tents, calumny would soon have been rife in Lucknow ; and some of these very ladies would have been the first to charge us with violating their privacy. A charge of having made our way into the harem would bring down at once upon us the anger of the king and of the resident ; and then, farewell, a long farewell, to all our hopes of fortune,

to the little or the much we had accumulated. In the second place, our own tent, left without a guard, would soon have been pillaged ; and however chivalrous men may be, they do not usually take care of other people's property before their own. Fewer than four of us could not have ventured forth to the succour of the distressed damsels ; many of whom, by the bye, would not have thanked us for the interference, if everything we heard was true ; and had we all gone, who was to prevent our clothes and our saddles, our couches and our travelling paraphernalia, nay, our very horses and palanquins, from being carried off ?

Our horses were picqueted round the tent, and could not be carried off without alarming the native grooms with them ; for, on the first alarm, the ropes by which they were attached to the stakes driven into the ground were firmly tied round the arms of the grooms within.

Amid such sights and sounds as I have described we sat in our tent, smoking our cigars, during the long hours of darkness. In the morning, when we sallied forth to see the results of the tumult of the preceding night, a stranger or a more variegated scene it would not be easy to discover anywhere, or even to picture to the imagination. One of the royal tents had been blown down ; and so intent was the king upon instant departure, that he would not allow any attempt to be made to raise it again.

Every man was to assist in getting ready what was needful for the rapid march back to Lucknow—more resembling a flight than a march; and no one thought of the fallen tent—no one except the villagers, *they* had not forgotten it. Notwithstanding all that the guards of the nawab could do, it had been ransacked and plundered. Even the very coat and pantaloons the king had taken off the previous evening were stolen. The whole ground around the encampment was littered, when we visited it, with portions of female attire that had been dropped in the hot haste of the plunderers as they made away with their booty. Articles, many of them of considerable value, lay strewn about in hopeless confusion—articles of furniture, cooking-apparatus, clothing, trappings for elephants and camels; the whole was, in fact, a complete litter of every kind of oriental requirement for the house, the person, and the road. Not *all* oriental, either. To our surprise, we noticed portions of female attire here and there never used by the Eastern ladies; articles with which the shop-windows in London make the modest bachelor painfully familiar. We were perfectly aware that no European in the king's service—cook, barber, coachman, or of the household—had his wife with him during the march; and our conclusion was, therefore, that these articles belonged to some ladies of the harem, of whom we had heard and knew nothing.

That there had been hard fighting between the servants of the nawab and the villagers, was apparent enough ; for two men lay hacked and hewn almost to pieces upon the ground, both evidently strangers to the encampment ; and we heard that several of the nawab's servants had been severely wounded.

We returned to our tent, to partake of a hasty breakfast preparatory to departure. On reaching our quarters, we found everybody and everything in confusion and uproar. It was some time before we succeeded in making ourselves heard, and getting intelligible answers to the questions we asked, so fierce was the dispute, and loud and violent the abuse. It was evident at a glance that some servants of the nawab were in violent altercation with ours, about what or wherefore we could not understand. Sticks were even raised in an eminently threatening way upon both sides ; and, had our return been delayed, another fight would have taken place in our very tent.

“ The good-for-nothings will not obey the orders of his excellency the nawab, O sahebs,” shouted the chief of the intruders.

“ The vile sons of vile mothers want us to leave my lords' tent, and go and help them somewhere else,” screamed our servants in chorus.

Both parties spoke, Hindu fashion, at the utmost pitch of their voices. When men quarrel in India, they invariably try and frighten each other with loud *talking*.

We were evidently interested in the matter in dispute. A little questioning soon brought forth the information, that the nawab had sent an order to the sahebs' servants to assist in the general work of the encampment before departing; and the messengers wanted to press into their service all our bearers and grooms—all not actually engaged in packing or preparing breakfast. Had we submitted to this injustice, as we considered it, there was no telling when we should be able to depart; and, with a large stock of muddy linen, it was my interest to get back to Lucknow as soon as possible. I was by no means the only one, however, who felt the necessity of immediate departure. The king's company would leave the country through which we had to travel bare enough of labourers to assist in carrying our palanquins; if the nawab's also left before us, there is no telling when we should reach Lucknow, or whether we should reach it at all; for the European members of the king's household were not popular in Oude.

We reasoned calmly and quietly, representing the anxiety of the king for our presence, and his commands to follow him with all convenient speed. We were answered, that the nawab would take upon his own head the blame of our delay. We urged again, that it was our duty to attend his majesty forthwith; and that if we gave up our servants without a struggle, we should be wanting in respect to "the refuge of the world." We were answered, that in the king's

absence the nawab was the ruler, and that the command was his. We urged again, that we had several brace of pistols, six fowling-pieces, two rifles, and a large variety of swords, and that we were able to defend ourselves and our servants. The quiet reply was, that the nawab had three servants for our one, a much larger collection of arms, and if forced to use violence, would leave us no servants at all.

The quiet firmness of the officer sent with the party convinced us that the nawab was determined in the matter. Mingling his words with polite flattery and Oriental exaggeration of our bravery and greatness, he yet persisted incessantly, never yielding so much as an inch.

We were at our wits' end. It was a very unpleasant position in which to be placed ; and to fight the nawab we did not intend. At length, as we still argued uselessly, the barber was thought of. Not a native attendant upon the court but had a hearty and unfeigned fear of the barber ; his influence was known to be preponderant. An old and unsavoury proverb says, that if we think of a certain person he will appear. The barber was thought of at this moment, and the barber appeared. He was anxious to be off, too, immediately ; fortunately it was his interest, therefore, to travel with us, and to get to Lucknow as soon as possible. The circumstances were explained to him, and the little man seemed to grow big with indignation.

“You are all a pack of scoundrels together,” he exclaimed, addressing the officer, “every one of you, nawab and all.” This was in English, and was intended for the officer alone. “Go and tell his excellency,” he continued in his halting Hindustani, “that the ‘refuge of the world’ requires me to dress his hair. I must be in Lucknow without delay ; and these gentlemen will travel with me. Not a servant must be touched. Are there not villagers enough ?”

The officer said nothing in reply ; but bowed, and went his way. Nor did we murmur at being thus taken under the protection of the little hero of the curling-tongs—not of the razor, for he did not shave the king. The barber was satisfied ; we were satisfied ; and if the nawab was not, he never let us know the fact—we heard nothing more of the want of servants.

Arrived in the neighbourhood of Lucknow, we found the king was anxiously awaiting us in the palace whence we had set out—Dil-kushar.

“You have left me long by myself, gentlemen,” said his majesty, when we made our appearance one morning whilst the barber was officiating as usual ; “you have left me long by myself, gentlemen, in this dull place.”

“Your majesty travels more swiftly than ordinary men can do,” was the reply of one of our party.

“I am glad you are come : I have heard of the

plundering of the camp by those rebellious villagers ; may their fathers' and mothers' names be reviled ! The khan has been telling me about it. Let me hear it all again."

We told what we saw, and only what we saw. The king's anger grew fierce as he listened.

"To think," he stammered forth, "to think of the wretches daring to put their defiling hands on the clothes worn by me and by my wives. By my father's head, but they shall pay dearly for it !"

"The nawab, I have heard, your majesty," said the barber, "has seized the principal offenders ; and is bringing them here to await your majesty's pleasure."

"They shall die, khan, every one of them : no power on earth shall save one of them, if there are a hundred."

Such was the sentence of the "refuge of the world."

We saw those miserable wretches afterwards, as they were being brought to the palace. They were certainly ferocious, cut-throat-looking fellows enough. Each was strapped down to a charpoy, like a drunken man on a police-stretcher in England ; and all of them had cuts of swords or stabs of daggers about their persons, their wounds unbound and unattended to. There were probably a dozen of them. The fatal order was given, and their heads were cut off the same day. Whether they actually were the

principal delinquents in the plundering of the encampment or not, I cannot of course decide ; the nawab's word was taken for it that they were. It certainly was his interest to appease the king by some such sacrifice ; and if these poor wretches had been only harmless villagers, seized for the purpose by the lawless soldiery who attended the nawab, it would have been no worse than things which constantly take place in India—not in native states only. A great crime was never yet committed there, but the police were sure to find out some poor wretches who should suffer as the criminals, and who, they were convinced, if you believed them, were the actual perpetrators.

Summary justice was the rule in Oude. Except in Lucknow there were no jails ; so that when a man was taken up for a theft, if the suspicion was strong against him, or the swearing hard enough, off went his head forthwith. The chucklidars had not time for the administration of justice after the European fashion. Bad as "Company's law" may anywhere be, it is my honest conviction, that the people of Oude would be a thousand times better off under a European magistrate—ignorant though he might be of their dialect, and unable to understand their evidence—than under the summary chucklidars.

CHAPTER V.

FAVOURITISM.

The barber's monthly bill—Nuna—Rise and fall of the Cashmere girl—The poet-dancer—Caprice—A friend from Calcutta Silver-stick—The elephant-fight—Royal favour—Mr. and Mrs. Smith—The killut—My friend's departure.

WITH such a sovereign, and amongst people so generally submissive to authority as the inhabitants of India, it will be readily believed that the caprice of favouritism knew no bounds. The barber was an extraordinary instance, of course, of a man obtaining and retaining the king's affection ; although he could scarcely speak the language of the country, and the king could express himself in English but imperfectly.

Of the title of nobility, the extensive authority in the palace, and the monopoly of European supplies, which the hero of the curling-tongs enjoyed, I have already spoken. He was also head of the menagerie, a sort of park-ranger in fact. I was once witness, and only once, to the length of the monthly bills which he presented to his majesty.

It was after tiffin, or lunch, when we usually retired from the palace until dinner-time at nine o'clock, that the favourite entered with a roll of paper in his hand. In India, long documents, legs

and commercial, are usually written, not in books or on successive sheets, but on a long scroll, strip being joined to strip for that purpose, and the whole rolled up like a map.

"Ha, khan!" said the king, observing him;
"the monthly bill, is it?"

"It is, your majesty," was the smiling reply.

"Come, out with it: let us see the extent.
Unroll it, khan."

The king was in a playful humour; and the barber was always in the same mood as the king. He held the end of the roll in his hand, and threw the rest along the floor, allowing it to unroll itself as it retreated. It reached to the other side of the long apartment,—a goodly array of items and figures, closely written too. The king wanted it measured. A measure was brought, and the bill was found to be four yards and a half long. I glanced at its amount; it was upwards of ninety thousand rupees, upwards of nine thousand pounds!

The king looked also at the total.

"Larger than usual, khan," said he, as he did so.

"Yes, your majesty, the plate, and the new elephants, &c. &c."

"Oh it's all right, I know," said the king, interrupting him; "take it to the nawab, and tell him to pay it."

The signature was affixed, and the bill was paid.

“The khan is robbing your majesty,” said an influential courtier to the king some months afterwards; “his bills are exorbitant.”

“If I choose to make the khan a rich man, is that anything to you,—to any of you? I know his bills are exorbitant; let them be so; it is my pleasure. He *shall* be rich.” Such was the king’s indignant answer.

But the barber was by no means the only example of the capricious favouritism of his majesty. Two particular instances I well remember of caprice pushed to the very verge of extravagance,—yet caprice by no means unusual in despotic sovereigns, particularly oriental.

One of these cases was that of a Cashmere singing-girl. She was eminently handsome; with the large black eyes peculiar to the East, and that perfection of physical form more frequently observed in India than elsewhere, on account of the dress. English women buy their shapes ready made for them in cloth and whalebone; Indian women exhibit those forms which the Almighty bestowed upon them.

This Cashmere girl, Nuna by name, delighted his majesty all the more because the agent who had engaged her in the Punjab had said little about her merits. There was a pathos about her voice in singing,—a plaintive pathos, as she sang of the *happy valley* where she had been brought up; there was a languor with a drooping sadness about th

large black eyes, and an indifference and ease of manner about every movement, all very charming to hear and see.

She was introduced only as an ordinary nautch-girl ; but, fortunately or unfortunately for her, the other entertainment of the evening had been an utter failure, and a languid attention was bestowed upon her. The king looked, listened, was pleased, and expressed his pleasure. Nuna's eyes glowed with triumph and exultation as she heard his words ; you could see the heaving of her bosom as she tried to compose her agitated thoughts. " Shavash ! shavash !" (bravo ! bravo !) shouted the king ; and the poor girl's colour came and went, with pride and pleasure, as in a hectic fever. Blame her not, good reader ; it was a king who was thus applauding, and two of that king's six wives were of humbler origin than Nuna. Many a dancing-girl in India has given heirs to its proudest thrones. The mother of Maharajah Dhuleep Singh, heir of Runjit Singh, the lion-king of the Punjab, was a dancing-girl ; and Maharajah Dhuleep Singh has been the honoured guest of the Queen of England.

Blame not poor Nuna, then, if she felt intoxicated with joy. For a little I thought her excitement would have overcome her ; but no, in a minute she was herself again. Every eye at our table was bent upon her. She recovered her composure, and danced and sang better than ever.

“ You shall have a thousand rupees for this night’s singing,” said the king.

A thousand rupees, a hundred pounds,—a fortune to a poor Cashmere girl !

When the king was leaving the table for the harem, he would have no support but Nuna’s arm. He went off, leaning his head upon her shoulder ; and Nuna’s colour went and came more rapidly than ever. It was indecorous, however, for his majesty to introduce a nautch-girl into the harem,—custom prohibits such introduction in India ; but little recked he of customs that interfered with his caprices.

The next evening, no other nautch-girl but Nuna would be heard. She was richly decorated ; jewels glistened on her arms and ankles ; the flush of triumph was on her cheek.

“ You shall have two thousand rupees (two hundred pounds) for this night’s singing,” exclaimed the king ; and again was he borne off by Nuna from the table.

This went on for many evenings so. The king’s liberality apparently knew no bounds ; and the court bowed before Nuna. The king’s wives no longer remembered that she was a nautch-girl. The female attendants, who had regarded her the first evening with contempt, were first civil, then respectful, then subservient and fawning.

“ I will build you a house of gold, and you shall be

my Padshah Begum* some day, Nuna," exclaimed the king, at length, in a drunken fit of enthusiasm one evening. Nuna's favour was at its height.

Our dinners were interrupted for a week by some native holidays. We saw nothing of Nuna during that week. At its conclusion she re-appeared again, looking and singing and dancing as well as ever.

" Boppery bopp!" exclaimed the king, yawning as he gazed on her, " but she wearies me. Is there no other amusement this evening? Let us have a quail-fight, khan."

The barber rose to order in the quails. The king looked at Nuna with languid satiety.

" I wonder how she would look in a European dress," he observed, half to himself, half to the tutor, who sat next to him.

No one replied. The barber re-appeared, and the king made the same observation to him.

" Nothing is easier, sire, than to see how she would look," was the barber's reply.

A gown and other articles of European female attire were sent for from the barber's house, for he was a married man; and when they were brought, Nuna was told to retire and put them on.

The quails came, and the fight proceeded on the table between the rival cocks.

* The chief wife,—the queen,—properly the first wife of the king. The Padshah Begum of Nussir was a daughter of the king of Delhi. The exclamation above was simply a drunken bravo.

Poor Nuna re-appeared in her new costume. A more wretched transformation it is hardly possible to conceive. The clothes hung loosely about her in an eminently dowdyish way. She felt that she was ridiculous. All grace was gone ; all beauty was hidden. It was distressing to see her disheartened look as she took her place again.

The king and the barber laughed heartily at her plight, whilst hot scalding tears coursed down Nuna's cheeks. The attendant females had no pity for her, and chuckled at her disgrace, turning up their pretty lips, just as Englishwomen used to do, in virtuous indignation, when they exclaimed,

“ Impudent minx ! ”

For days, nay for weeks, did poor Nuna so re-appear, a laughing-stock. The king would see her in no other dress. Everything she did was displeasing. She asked permission again and again to leave the court and return to Cashmere ; but such permission was denied her. She interceded with the barber ; but it was useless. His heart was of stone.

The Mohurrim* intervened. For forty days we saw nothing of the king, except occasionally at a morning durbar. During the Mohurrim there was no dancing, there were no European dinners in the palace. The king had made a vow, before

* Particularly described in Chapter XII.

coming to the throne, that if ever he *did* come to it he would keep the Mohurrim, not for ten days, as other people did, but for forty ; and he kept his vow.

The Mohurrim came, and we saw nothing more of poor Nuna. She never after appeared in the palace. What became of her I could never discover ; and the barber was either as ignorant as myself, or pretended to be so. His conjecture was, that she had been given as a slave to some of the Begums, and was in the harem ; but a eunuch told me she was not. Her name was once mentioned in the king's presence by me in an inquiring sort of way ; but he took no notice of it.

The other instance was one in which we felt less sympathy with the king on the one side, and the subject of his favouritism on the other, than we did for the ill-fated Nuna.

He was proceeding, with his usual retinue, along a public road that ran through the rumna or park. We were all going to Chaun-gunge, one of those garden palaces at which the fights of wild-beasts usually took place. The king was in an open carriage, thoroughly European in its equipments ; his Irish coachman, a comical character, on the box, and four beautiful cream-coloured Arabs beneath *him*. It was a delightful day ; and the king ordered *the* coachman to walk the horses, in order that he *might* enjoy the fresh air a little. It was the

month of December, and the air was mild and balmy, the sun's rays by no means oppressive.

We were riding a little behind the carriage, the body-guard following us. Occasionally one or the other rode up to the carriage, and conversed, hat in hand, with his majesty. We always took off our hats when he turned towards us or addressed us. The tutor was riding by the side of the carriage at the moment when a half-naked native, of tall stature and fine muscular development, emerged from the side of the road, and began dancing, and chanting a wild melody. The king turned to regard him. One or two troopers would have driven the fellow away; but his majesty called out to them to desist, and at the same time ordered his carriage to stop. It was the merest caprice that made him do so; at another time he would probably have laughed heartily at the troopers chasing the vagrant.

Peeroo, for that was the wild fellow's name, was delighted with the attention he attracted to himself. The whole cavalcade was stopped whilst he went on with his uncouth dancing and the nasal twanging of an irregular song, which he had composed himself. Some happily-turned compliment or ingenious piece of flattery in the song arrested the king's attention. He was pleased, heard the fellow to the end, and ordered a native attendant to give him five gold *mohurs*—a sum equal to 8*l*.

"I will hear you again at the palace to-morrow;"

said the king, as he drove on ; whilst Peeroo assured him in reply, that the favour of the asylum of the universe was to him what the heat of the sun was to the palm-tree.

Peeroo was a poet, in his own wild way ; and, unlike poets of old, had little bashfulness. He made his appearance next day at the palace, and offered to sing a new song ; but the king would hear nothing but the same one that had first charmed him. Day after day did the lucky Peeroo make his appearance at the palace ; and day after day did the king hear the same melody, finding apparently ever new delight in it. Largess was showered upon the head of the fortunate minstrel, and he began to be somebody in Lucknow. Before a month had passed away, the nawab, imitating his master, gave presents to Peeroo ; the commander-in-chief did the same ; Rajah Buktawir Singh, the head of the police, followed suit, and money flowed fast into the open palm of Peeroo.

There was every probability that the adventurer would one day stand high amongst the nobles of Oude, and people bowed to him as he passed. " But surely this could not last ? " exclaims the reader. One would suppose not, certainly ; but it did last notwithstanding. Apartments were prepared for Peeroo in the palace. His formerly nearly naked form was clothed in purple and fine linen. The nawab and the commander-in-chief and Rajah

Buktawir Singh, the three leading natives of the court, spoke to him as to an equal; and right jauntily did Peeroo carry his fine clothes and his new honours. When was there a poet yet who thought he got his deserts?

At first daily, then weekly, then monthly, and, in fine, rarely, did Peeroo sing his songs before his majesty; but he still continued a favourite. When I left Lucknow—about eighteen months after we had first seen him emerging from the side of the road, like a wild man of the woods, and in danger of being chased like a wild beast by the troopers—Peeroo was a noble, and a noble of note, in the court of Lucknow. I have forgotten the title which he received; but he was made a Singh of course, to which I doubt not Rajah was subsequently prefixed; for Peeroo was a Hindu. Rajah and Singh are exclusively Hindu titles, I believe; Nawab and Meer are Mussulman.

And now that I am on this subject of favouritism, I cannot do better than bring in an account of the visit of a friend of mine from Calcutta,—since sheriff of Middlesex,—who particularly pleased the king.

I had been some months in Lucknow when he wrote to me from Allahabad that he was returning to England, and had determined to see something of the upper provinces before he went. His object in writing was to know whether, if he came to Lucknow

then, there was any chance of his seeing any of the animal fights, anything of the court, anything, in fact, peculiar to Lucknow, and for which the capital of Oude was famous.

My correspondent had made a good deal of money as a merchant in Calcutta. He had been an intimate friend of mine. I was anxious to oblige him. Men who have made their fortunes seldom find their friends disobliging. I wrote to him forthwith, telling him to come at once ; that I could show him the lions of the palace, give him a good view of the king, and take him through the menagerie. More I could not promise. Talking, however, with a courtier-friend on the subject, he remarked that the barber could easily get the king to have a good animal fight,—of elephants, for instance,—if he felt so disposed. “ Let us try, at all events,” he added ; “ there is no harm in trying.”

There was a billiard-table in the barber’s house, maintained by the king for the use of his European suite, at which we frequently assembled. One or other was almost always to be found there about the middle of the day. I found the great little man busy playing a game himself with the captain of the body-guard.

“ A friend of mine (Mr. R. of Calcutta) is coming over from Allahabad to see Lucknow,” said I to the favourite ; „ I suppose he can see the menagerie.”

“ Certainly,” said the barber, graciously ; “ I will

give you a *chobdar* (a silver-stick in waiting) to accompany him, if you like."

The barber was park-ranger, and the superintendent of the menagerie; his *chobdar*, therefore, would suffice to show us all that was to be seen there.

"I suppose there is no chance of an elephant-fight?" said I, in a careless, off-hand sort of way, as I watched the game.

"Cannon and pocket both, captain, by jingo!—Eh? I don't think there are any elephants *must** just now," was the barber's reply.

After a pause of a moment's duration, he turned round to me again, and asked abruptly:

"Is your friend a mercantile man? would he do a little in the way of investing money for me in Company's paper, do you think?"

"He is a mercantile man. You have heard of him, doubtless. R. of R. B. & Co. He has made his fortune; but I have no doubt that he would do anything reasonable to oblige me."

"Then it's all right. I'll settle the fight. If there are no elephants *must*, we can have tigers or rhinoceroses, perhaps. Count upon me. Off the red again—that's the game, captain. I owe you fifty rupees."

* That is, in that excited condition usually called heat. It is only when in this state that the elephant will fight. The females are never fought.

I went away well content.

My friend arrived on the following morning. I went to the private durbar to hear what was said about the animal fight. The barber was dressing the king's hair as usual; and as he dressed it, conversed with his majesty.

At length, in a pause of the conversation, he observed:

"Your majesty hasn't had any fights lately."

"No," said the king; "I'm sick of them. I don't think, though, there are any elephants *must*."

"There are, your majesty. I was informed so this morning."

"Do you want to have one?" asked the king.

"If your majesty so wills it, yes. Mr. R., one of the richest of the Calcutta merchants, has arrived; and as he is seeing Delhi, Agra, and other places, we don't want him to go away without good impressions of Lucknow."

"Certainly not," said the king; "and you can make him useful besides, I suppose, in Calcutta or England. Eh, khan?"

"Your majesty discovers everything," said the wily barber.

It was settled that the fight should come off the following day, about one o'clock, at Chaun-gunge. I returned to my friend, to apprise him of the fact.

"You must be civil to the barber," I concluded, "for he has done it all for you."

“ Civil to him ; who would not be civil to him ?— a king’s favourite and a noble !—to be sure I shall.”

Mr. R. of R. B. and Co., had evidently the primary qualifications necessary for a good courtier.

The chobdar came in due time ; and we sallied forth with him to inspect “ the lions ” of Lucknow before going to the menagerie to see the tigers. Of these “ lions ” I must afterwards say a few words ; but I cannot interrupt my story now to describe them. Of the tigers I shall have plenty to say hereafter.

Before the magical wand of that silver-stick (the chobdar) everything flew open : the palace ; the offices of government ; the military stores ; the Topkhana or arsenal ; the Emanbarra, too, which Bishop Heber (somewhat profanely, one would say, were he not a bishop) calls the Mussulman cathedral ; the mosques ; the gardens ; Constantia, the palace of General Martine ; the menagerie and the park.

On the following morning we drove out to Chaungunge, where all was prepared for the elephant fight. It was the usual scene of such encounters, a small lodge, like a country house, with large enclosures in its neighbourhood, situated three miles from Lucknow on the other side of the Goomty.

Securing another chobdar for the purpose, I placed *my friend* in an apartment beneath, whence he could

have a favourable view of the fight in the court-yard adjoining. I could not remain with him ; for it was my duty to ascend to the gallery above, and attend upon his majesty. The kettle-drums — emblems of sovereignty in Oude, and only borne before the King and Padshah Begum or Queen—the kettle drums announced the arrival of “the refuge of the world.” I ascended to take my wonted station, excusing myself to my friend.

The king soon made his appearance, and took his seat upon a sofa prepared for his reception ; the female fanners took their places behind him. We stood, some leaning over the parapet, some with a hand on the corner of the sofa, on each side.

“ Mr. R. from Calcutta is stopping with you,” said the king, addressing me.

“ He is, your majesty,” was my reply.

“ And where is he ? ”

“ He is beneath, Sire, in an apartment looking out upon the court-yard.”

“ Why did you not bring him here ? ”

“ I could not so far presume upon your majesty’s goodness.”

“ Pshaw, nonsense ; let him be brought ; he will see nothing there.”

Had I ventured to introduce him without the king’s direct command, he might probably have been ordered out of “the presence.”

I went below forthwith.

"The king commands me to bring you up to him," said I.

"Many thanks to his majesty, but I had rather stop here," was his cool reply.

"You must come. It would be an insult not to come."

"Some men have greatness thrust upon them," said he, as he prepared to mount to the gallery.

"Stop, stop, not so quick," said I, detaining him; "you must not go before the king empty-handed. You must offer a present of some gold mohurs."

"I shall do nothing of the kind. What! pay some gold mohurs for looking at him?"

I explained that it was a mere form. That the king would nod, or touch the coin, as he felt disposed to be cool or cordial; and when that was once done, he might put the money in his pocket again. I had sent off to borrow the coins. They came; and my friend, duly prepared, ascended,—with a white handkerchief on his open palm and the pieces of gold on the handkerchief. He drew near the king. His majesty looked keenly at him for a moment, and then placed one hand under his, and touched the money with the fingers of the other hand. It was a mark of the greatest cordiality, and he ought to have been greatly pleased and flattered. Instead of being so, he looked puzzled. As he afterwards told me, he thought the king was going to take the

money ; and he was thinking of shutting his hand and preventing him ; “for these natives are not to be trusted,” said he, as he told me this. But he was speedily relieved by the king withdrawing his hand, and he then put the money into his pocket forthwith.

The signal was given, and the elephants advanced against each other. The fight was an ordinary one—nothing remarkable about it—ending in the flight of one of the combatants. My friend seemed to enjoy it amazingly, and the king was delighted with his honest admiration. Before the contest ended, his majesty had become so much fascinated with his new acquaintance, that he invited him to sit beside him on the sofa. Mr. R., doubtful whether this was quite right, and seeing us all standing, hesitated, and declined, saying he was “very comfortable.” Nothing could be more rude ; for the king intended to do him a great honour. At another time, such conduct might have drawn down one of the darkest frowns and one of the abruptest orders to leave “the presence,” upon the offender. But the king was in an excellent humour, laughed at the *brusque* reply, and repeated his invitation. Mr. R. looked at me distressed, the laughter making him fear he had been guilty of some unintentional rudeness. I beckoned to him to sit ; and down he sat on the extreme verge of the sofa, most uncomfortably. The attendant females now divided their fanning between the





king and his honoured guest, for such was the etiquette.

At length, the spectacle concluded, we returned to our elephant. I attended the king as he entered his carriage.

"We dine alone to-day; bring your friend with you," said he, as he rested for a moment upon the arm of the favourite.

"You are in luck my friend," said I, as I mounted the elephant after Mr. R. "You are to dine with his majesty."

"The devil I am!" was his irreverent exclamation. "I had rather a thousand times dine alone, or with you."

"It must not be. In truth, you are already a favourite. It was a great honour he did you in asking you to be seated."

"An honour I would gladly have dispensed with. Standing was infinitely more comfortable than sitting on the knife-like edge of that sofa."

Yet, with all his depreciation of the honours conferred upon him, I saw that Mr. R. was well pleased at heart to have made so favourable an impression. I had not much difficulty in getting him to accept the king's invitation. He evidently began to suspect that nature had intended him for a courtier, not for a merchant; and he paid more attention to his toilet in consequence, that evening, *than he had ever paid before.*

When we followed his majesty into the dining-room, he would have his newly-found friend seated next to him at dinner.

"Perhaps, master, you will let Mr. R. sit beside me," said the king, turning to the tutor ; and the tutor made way forthwith. This was another honour ; but my friend Mr. R. was beginning to become so accustomed to honours, that he accepted it with the greatest possible *sang froid*, as if, indeed, to sit beside a king at dinner was a thing he had been accustomed to all his life.

As course succeeded course, and one bottle of champagne popped pleasantly after another, the king's heart opened. "The greatest of my friends is in England now," said he ; "and you are going there too."

This "greatest of his friends" was a former resident, with whom the king had been on very intimate terms ; let us call him Mr. Smith ; that name will do as well as any other. Mr. Smith had a very captivating wife ; and scandal did say that the king was fonder of Mrs. Smith than of her husband. All that, however, was before *my* time in Lucknow, so that I can only speak as rumour reported. Mr. Smith left Lucknow, quoth rumour, with seventy-five lakhs of rupees, that is with 750,000*l*. So large was the amount invested in Mr. Smith's name in Company's paper, that an investigation took place,—an investigation conducted by the Bengal Government, with

closed doors ; and the result was, that Mr. Smith resigned the service and returned to England.

“ The greatest of my friends is in England now,” said the king ; “ and you are going there too.”

There was pathos in his majesty’s words—a pathos conceived of sentiment and born of champagne.

“ And who had the honour to be your majesty’s greatest friend ? ” asked Mr. R., somewhat boldly.

“ Wah, wah, but it was Mr. Smith ; he was once resident here,” was his majesty’s reply.

“ Mr. Smith ! ” exclaimed my friend, “ Mr. Smith ! I was his agent. I knew him well.”

“ You knew him, my friend, my good friend, my very good friend ;—you knew him, did you say ? I loved him, and—— well it’s no matter now. Bop-perry bopp ! but I could cry over it. Fill your glasses, gentlemen—a bumper, a brimming bumper to Mr. Smith.”

The bumper was drank,—a tumbler of champagne was poured incontinently down every man’s throat.

“ And now, gentlemen,” said the king, “ fill your glasses again—to the brim, gentlemen. Two bumpers to Mrs. Smith.”

Two bumpers disappeared—two tumblers of champagne rolled whizzing down the throats of us all.

The king was fast succumbing. His sentiment and the champagne were too much for him.

“ Shall you see my best friend, Mr. Smith, in England ? ” he asked.

"I must see him. I have business to transact with him," was Mr. R.'s reply.

The king took off his beautifully-jewelled watch,—a watch of excellent workmanship, that had cost 15,000 francs in Paris; watch and chain, he took them both off, and throwing the chain round my friend's neck, "Promise me," said he, "promise me as a—hic, hic—as a gentleman, that you'll put that chain round Mrs. Smith's neck as I put it round yours—hic, hic—promise me."

"I give you my word of honour as a gentleman, I will, if she'll let me," was Mr. R.'s prudent reply.

"Tell her it comes from me, and she will;—hic, hic—khan, go and order a *killut* for my friend, a *killut* of some worth, and—hic, hic—add five hundred gold mohurs to it."

The *killut* or king's present was brought—two Cashmere shawls of exquisite workmanship, and a handkerchief for the neck. The king himself put the shawls and the handkerchief on his newly-found friend, being assisted therein by the barber; and Mr. R. perspired amazingly, for it was very hot; perspired and professed himself highly honoured. The revel continued into the small hours of the morning. His majesty could talk only of Mr. and Mrs. Smith, his very good friends, saying far more than it would be safe for me to put on record.

Our palanqueens awaited us—the revel was over. The king was assisted into the harem, after an

affectionate leave-taking with Mr. R. ; and, still accoutred in his dress of honour, I followed my friend down to the portico where our vehicles stood. The distance was not great, but the stairs were very wide.

Next morning, before we had concluded breakfast, a servant of the nawab made his appearance with a bag of gold mohurs, five hundred in number, which he placed upon the table, as a part of the *killut* of the "refuge of the world" for R. Saheb. Mr. R.'s first impulse was to refuse accepting it. I assured him that he could not offer a greater insult to the king, which was the case. Yet it was not without much talking that I persuaded him to retain the 800*l.* thus thrown into his purse. Court etiquette required it to be accepted unhesitatingly ; to have refused it would have been to say that it was not enough, and that he was determined to insult his majesty in return.

A messenger from the king made his appearance shortly after, requiring my attendance in the palace. I lost no time in presenting myself before his majesty, who exclaimed, as soon as he saw me,—

"I am delighted with your friend—I am charmed with him ; tell him, if he will stop here, and take service in my household, he shall be my very good friend."

The barber was evidently uneasy at this ; for he met me at the door, and asked me,

“Do you think Mr. R. will stop?”

“I cannot tell,” was my reply; “he seems pleased that the king took so much notice of him.”

I returned to my house, and reported the king's message. It was useless, however. England and home presented greater attractions to the exile than the favour of a monarch. He was grateful, but determined. That evening he left Lucknow.

The reader may feel disposed to remark here, that this lavish expenditure—thousands of rupees and hundreds of gold mohurs bestowed upon his minor favourites, and nearly ten thousand pounds a month paid occasionally for the barber's bills, must have soon emptied his majesty's treasury. And the reader's remark is well-founded and just; for, though the revenues of Oude were nominally upwards of a million and a half a year, yet, out of that, troops had to be paid, and the expenses of a court maintained. This, however, is to be remembered, that Nussir's father, Ghazi-u-deen, left his treasury well filled, and Nussir emptied it,—that besides the ordinary revenue, there were confiscations and fines constantly made and levied, to a far greater amount than the king's presents; and that the wealth of the other members of his family, which was vast, was occasionally put under contribution. Notwithstanding *all this*, however, for the last year or two of Nussir's reign there was a great want of money in the palace of Lucknow.

CHAPTER VI.

THE "LIONS" OF LUCKNOW.

The throne-room—The *levée*—The Emanbarra—Constantia—General Martine—Mosques and houses—Apartments underground—Lucknow beggars.

THERE is little more to be said about the royal palace—the Fureed Buksh—than what I have said about it already. Its extent, its numerous courts, its tanks or ornamental ponds, its gardens, and its extensive out-offices, all mingled and commingled together, were its chief external characteristics. Its rich hangings, its profuse gilding, its gaudy ornaments, its groups of curiosities, its dazzling lustres and sparkling chandeliers, were the chief peculiarities of the interior of the state apartments.

The throne-room alone is deserving of especial notice. Like all the other state-rooms, it had partaken of the alterations introduced by Nussir's European mania. Rich scarlet-and-gold hangings covered the walls, imposing enough in their appearance. A dim religious light came from the upper windows, which enhanced the solemnity of the royal receptions. A few full-length portraits of the royal family of Oude were visible here and there between the hangings—portraits by no means badly done.

Bishop Heber justly remarks, that the portrait-painter of the first king, Ghazi-u-deen, might have won distinction in London or Paris. The throne itself occupied the upper end of this large hall, and was a structure of great value. It consisted simply of a platform about two yards square, raised several feet above the floor, and approached in front by six steps. Upon three sides of it a golden railing extended. The sides of the platform were of solid silver, richly ornamented with jewels. The former king and the nawabs of Oude had been accustomed to sit in oriental fashion (after the manner of tailors with us) on a rich cushion placed on this platform ; but Nussir was too much Europeanized for that. He had a splendid chair of gold and ivory placed there instead of the cushion or musnud.

A square canopy, supported by poles,—the whole of wood, covered with beaten gold,—hung over the throne. Precious stones ornamented this canopy and these poles in great numbers. A magnificent emerald, said to be the largest in the world, was conspicuous in the front of the canopy above. The hangings, like those of the room, were of crimson velvet, with rich golden embroidery and a fringe of pearls. A gilt chair always stood upon the right of the throne for the resident.

On the occasions of public durbars, or councils of state, the chief nobility of Oude, and any English officers whom the resident chose, were presented to

the king. They advanced with the usual present in their hands, just as I have formerly described, salaaming low as they came. The king touched the present with his finger, if disposed to be very gracious, or bowed distantly if anxious to display resentment. The nawab, or prime-minister, then took the present, and laid it on one side of the throne, and the presenter retired backwards to the right or left—usually to the right, if a European ; to the left, if a native. When all had been presented, the king placed a necklace of honour on the resident, and the resident returned the compliment. They then advanced into the centre of the hall, where necklaces were bestowed upon those whom it was the king's intention to honour, or whom the resident wished to be honoured. These necklaces are called *haarhs*, and are usually formed of silver ribands. We of the household frequently got them, and invariably sold them afterwards to some of the native jewellers about the court. They varied in value from five to twenty-five rupees (10s. to 50s.).

After these ceremonious levees were concluded, the king usually conducted the resident to the door of the apartment, poured otta of roses on his hands at leave-taking, and exclaimed, "*Khoda hafiz*," God be with you. His majesty then made his way in all haste to the private apartment, where we awaited him at lunch. Taking his seat, he would toss off the crown with very little ceremony, throw his

robes aside, snap his fingers impatiently, and exclaim, as he seated himself :

“ *Taza be taz,** it’s all over, thank God ! *Boppery bopp!* but I am dying of thirst ; how wearisome all this is ! ”

The king’s Emanbarra, called the Shah Nujeef, is unquestionably the finest building in Lucknow, in an architectural point of view. An Emanbarra is a building raised by that sect of Moslems called Sheahs, for the celebration of the Mohurrim, which shall be more particularly described in a subsequent chapter. Every family of distinction has its own, and the owner is not unusually buried in it.

The royal Emanbarra stands near the “ Constantinople gate ” of Lucknow (the *Room-i-durwaza*)—a gate built on the model of that which gave to the court of the sultan the title of “ the Sublime Porte.” Both structures, the gate and the Emanbarra, are elegant, and harmonise well with each other. Two square courts extend in front of the building of the Emanbarra, beautifully decorated with rich tessellated pavements. The inner of these courts is raised several feet above the level of the outer.

The Emanbarra belongs to that style of architecture aptly called by Bishop Heber “ the oriental Gothic.” It combines the minarets of the Mussulman temple with the pointed domes of the Hindu,

* The beginning of a native song. Here it means nothing more than *fiddle-de-dee* in English.

and is, on the whole, a lofty, imposing, well-proportioned edifice. Its central hall is upwards of 150 feet long, by 50 wide; and its brilliant character may be conceived when it is stated, that a grave writer, who had evidently visited it, asserts that Asoph-u-dowlah, one of the most magnificent nawabs of Oude, spent a million of pounds sterling in furnishing it with chandeliers and mirrors.* This statement I regard, however, as a gross exaggeration.

Let us pass from the Emanbarra to Constantia—a whimsical pile of buildings of vast extent, erected at a great expense by General Martine, a Frenchman. Having entered the Company's service, towards the end of the last century, as a private soldier, he was afterwards transferred to the army of the nawab of Oude, and rose step by step to the rank of general, amassing enormous wealth as he rose. He was a prudent and successful cock-fighter; and Saadut Ali, the reigning nawab of those days, was fond of betting with him.

General Martine left 100,000*l.* to found a school for orphan children in Lyons, his birthplace; a similar sum for founding a similar institution in Calcutta; and an amount nearly equal for a third in Lucknow. Each of these institutions is called *La Martinière*, as directed by the founder, and all are flourishing and useful. Constantia, his residence, he

* *The Calcutta Review*, vol. iii. p. 381.

left to the public as a serai or caravansery. It was called, I was told, after his first love, a French maiden, whom he had left behind him in France; and who died long before he attained to wealth and honours. To prevent the nawab from confiscating the building and estate, the general was buried, by his own directions, beneath it; for a Mussulman, however unjust, will respect a grave. His tomb, in a sort of crypt beneath, is shown to visitors. A white marble bust of him stands on a sarcophagus, supported by two figures of sepoys, coloured! The whole is in execrable taste.

When the General died, his furniture was sold by auction; and the Company's agents purchased the chandeliers and lustres of Constantia to decorate the governor-general's palace in Calcutta. They got them a dead bargain, for the king of Oude would not bid against the Company; and the honourable Company was delighted with its commercial sagacity. No Yankee pedlar could have done the thing better.

When one has said that Constantia is vast and whimsical, all has been said about it that needs be said. Some part of the grounds reminded me of the gardens of Versailles, particularly a sheet of water in the form of a cross, with groves of clipped trees on either side; but, on the whole, although it is apparent that vast sums have been spent to produce the result that one sees before him, yet that result is altogether *bizarre* and wanting in harmony.

The courts and fountains are European, the turrets and domes are essentially Asiatic in their character. The rooms have a certain European air about them, whilst the verandahs and the blinds are thoroughly Indian. Extent and incongruity are the characteristics of Constantia.

The mosques and bazaars at Lucknow do not differ so materially from those of other Oriental cities as to render any particular description of them necessary. The warlike air given to the latter by the armed men who constantly pass and repass in them is that which peculiarly distinguishes them. Men of rank are usually accompanied about the streets by their armed retainers, the more numerous in proportion to their station or wealth ; and it is by no means an unusual thing to witness fights between such bands in the narrow streets of the lower town. The shouts and warlike sounds which give notice to distant citizens of such encounters are sufficient to deter the more peaceful or the more timid from visiting the quarter whence they issue, whilst the turbulent or valorous are attracted to the neighbourhood by the clamour. Much blood is often thus shed—I say *is*, for the Indian newspapers assure me, in their monthly budgets, that Lucknow is still what it was—the Lucknow of 1855 differing in no essential particular from that of 1835.

One peculiarity of the better class of houses in *Lucknow* I have not formerly mentioned—the fact

of their having underground apartments, to which the inhabitants retreat during the excessive heats of the hot season. Strange that men burrow in the earth to escape intense cold in one part of the world, and adopt exactly the same means to avoid intense heat in another. Extremes meet.

In the palace we had such an apartment, one sunk below the level of the surrounding court-yards ; and to us, the Europeans of the court, that apartment was intensely close, its atmosphere stifling and unpleasant. I would rather endure the extreme heat of the upper rooms, than the close, stifling, confined air of this refuge for "the refuge of the world." Fortunately we were not often called upon to occupy this lower apartment, for the king did not appear to like it. Indeed, the constant fanning which was carefully maintained around him when he was in the palace, would be sufficient to prevent the heat of the most suffocating day from telling much upon him. He only occupied the lower apartment occasionally, because it was the fashion of the nobility of Oude so to do at particular seasons ; and as those fashions from which he derived neither comfort nor amusement influenced him little, his annual burrowing was by no means long-continued.

Of the swarms of beggars which infest the streets and bazaars of Lucknow, and which may be regarded as one of its sights, other writers have said so much, that it is not necessary to dilate upon the

matter here. Visitors to Italian cities are too much accustomed to such sights to make it a special peculiarity of Lucknow ; and as all the world travels now-a-days, " doing " France, the Rhine, and Italy, in the shortest conceivable space of time, it is not necessary that I should enter particularly into the beggar-plague at Lucknow. Some have remarked that there were more old women amongst the beggars of Oude than in any other part of world ; and I think there is some foundation for the remark, although I cannot pretend to account for the fact.

Diseased, deformed, diminutive wretches of both sexes ; some young, some old and withered, some whining out their lamentations incessantly, others contenting themselves with occasional groans, are to be met with in almost every quarter of Lucknow ; and the habit of bestowing large sums in alms, when " great " people move about, and at religious festivals and ceremonies, doubtless tends to encourage the trade and increase the numbers of idlers. If men can get anything in India without working for it, they will exhibit an amazing amount of patience in waiting ; the waiting faculty, in fact, is only fully developed near the tropics. There is a peculiarity, however, about Lucknow beggars, that would strike the European traveller, however well up in the continent, as strange. All the male beggars go armed ; *some of them carrying their arms jauntily too, as if by no means ashamed of their profession, nay, rather*

glorying in it. "The light of the sun has shone upon my lord's slave, and he will be fed," says a bold impudent fellow with a huge mustache, a sword, and a shield, as he puts out his hand for an alms. *You* are the light of the sun that has shown upon him ; and the compliment, he thinks, is worth a labourer's day's pay. You turn from him in disgust ; and he then as quietly enlightens you as to his opinion of your female relations (your mother and your sisters particularly), in language too plain and energetic for translation—in language rather bold and expressive than elegant.

That this profession of beggary is by no means regarded as a thing to be ashamed of in Lucknow, is proved by the airs which the beggars give themselves, and the cool way in which they will settle how much such and such a noble ought to pay to their class now that his wife has given him a son and heir, or now that his daughter is to be married. They know the value of such ceremonies and festivals to a pice. I have heard of one beggar of distinction who had an elephant of his own, and daily went round the city on it collecting alms from his patrons.

CHAPTER VII.

THE MAN-EATER.

A deserted street—Deaths—The man-eater loose—Burrhea—Manœuvering on both sides—A tiger-spring—Foiled—The man-eater victorious—Burrhea's successor—The wild buffaloes—Triumph of the man-eater—His fate.

I WAS driving in a buggy one morning through one of the finest streets of Lucknow. A friend accompanied me ; and we were proceeding from the vicinity of the Goomty to one of the king's palaces. The deserted condition of the streets as we advanced surprised us. There was no inhabitant to be seen for a considerable distance ; and where one was visible, he or she was hurriedly departing from the broad line of road on which I drove. So many strange things occur in a city exposed to the capricious tyranny of a man without any restraining principle, that we felt by no means that astonishment which any one fresh from England would have felt under the circumstances. Some execution, we whispered to each other, some fresh *example*,—nothing more.

At length, in the middle of the road, we came upon a trampled bloody mass, bearing still some resemblance to a human figure. We stopped the buggy to inspect it. It was the corpse of a poor

native female; but terribly disfigured. The body was bruised and lacerated in all directions, the scanty drapery torn from the form; the face had been crushed as if by teeth into a shapeless mass; the long matted hair, which fell in bundles over the road, was all clotted with blood. It was altogether as disgusting a sight as one could well see anywhere. Apparently she was quite dead; and we did not delay.

On we went; still no sign of inhabitants—the houses everywhere closed—breathless terror reigning on all sides. It was not long before we came upon the figure of a youth, similarly mangled and destroyed, lying also in the road, more towards the side, however. On the top of an adjoining house we saw one of the king's troopers standing, looking intently up the road along which we were advancing.

"What is the matter?" I asked.

"The man-eater is loose," was the reply; "wal-lah, but he has turned again. Look out for your safety, sahebs; he is wild to-day."

I had heard of a savage horse belonging to one of the king's troopers that went by this name,—*admeekanawallah*, the *man-eater*; because he had been the destruction of many men.

"He is coming, sahebs!" shouted the trooper from the house-top; "take care, take care!"

Far along the road in front of us we could see the wild brute—a large bay entire horse he was, as we

afterwards found—shaking a child whom he had seized as he held it in his mouth, shaking it savagely, but evidently coming towards us.

In another moment he had seen the vehicle, threw the child upon the road, dead no doubt, and rushed forward with savage fury to attack us. There was still a considerable space to be passed by him ; but not a moment was to be lost. We turned rapidly round, our horse almost unmanageable from terror, flying over the ground ; and away we went in a mad gallop down towards an enclosure with iron gates that we had passed a short time before. The man-eater pursued with hearty good will. We could hear his iron hoofs clattering over the road as he advanced.

We gained the enclosure—turned into it—my companion leaped from the buggy, and shut the gate. The whole was the action of a moment. It fortunately shut with a heavy bolt which fell into a socket ; and just as the fall of the bolt secured our safety, the man-eater came tramping up. His head was covered with blood, his jaws steaming with recent slaughter, his cheeks horrid with coagulated gouts that had most probably spirted from his victims. There he stood, looking savagely after us through the iron railings, with cocked ears, distended nostrils and glaring eye-balls,—a ferocious-looking monster ! Our horse trembled at the sound of his impatient snorting—trembled as if shivering with cold ! The man-

eater glared at us through the iron bars, and walked round to the side; but all was hard iron railing, substantial too. There was no entrance to be got. Satisfied that he was baffled, at length he turned round, rattled his iron heels against the bars, and then scampered, with head and tail erect and cocked ears, down the road, towards an archway which was built over it. Here several troopers were waiting for him. A noose was thrown skilfully over the uplifted head. He was upset, muzzled, and conducted to his stable. And the poor woman and youth and child? you ask. I heard nothing more of them. Doubtless their friends bore them off and buried them.

At dinner that day I took the liberty of mentioning the circumstance to his majesty.

"I have often heard of that man-eater," said he; "he must be a furious beast."

"He is more savage than a tiger, your majesty."

"A tiger—good—he shall fight a tiger. We shall see what impression Burrhea will make on him."

Burrhea was the name of a favourite tiger of the king's, so called from a village at the foot of the Himalayas, near which he had been taken. The king would never allow him to fight with other tigers or with elephants; he was a pet, and was only allowed to enter into contests with such animals as he could easily vanquish.

It was on the following day, in the morning, before lunch, we were all assembled at Chaun-gunge in the

gallery of a court-yard, about sixty yards square in extent,—a court-yard with buildings all round, and and a verandah below. Thick bamboo railing had been put up in front of the verandah, so as completely to encircle the court-yard, and to form a sort of enlarged cage. The man-eater had been enticed into the enclosure by means of a little mare—a *tattoo*, as the country horses are called—of trifling value.

The king and his usual suite of female attendants had taken their places in the gallery, he on a sofa placed there for the purpose, they behind him. We stood on his majesty's right and left, leaning on the parapet or on the sofa. Every one commanded a full view of the court-yard, and the ladies seemed to relish the prospect as much as any one.

The order was given, and Burrhea's cage was brought into the verandah. A door in the bamboo-railing, prepared for the purpose, was drawn up, the cage-door was opened, and Burrhea bounded into the court-yard, lashing his sides with his long tail, and glaring furiously upon the man-eater and his little female friend. A more beautiful tiger than Burrhea it would not be easy to discover in all India. His glossy coat, regularly streaked, shone in the enclosure, in pleasant contrast with the frowsy covering of the little mare. Even the well-kept hide of the man-eater was sadly wanting in brilliancy when compared with the glittering skin of Burrhea.

The tiger had been kept without food or drink from the previous day to prepare him for the assault. He glared savagely at the horses as he entered, and commenced slowly stealing along towards them. The man-eater kept his eyes fixed on the eye-balls of his enemy. Not for an instant did he take them off; his head lowered, standing in an easy attitude, with one foot slightly advanced, he awaited the attack, moving as Burrhea moved, but always with the eyes intently fixed. As for the poor little mare, she was transfixed with fear—paralysed—apparently unable to take a thought for preservation. She stood cowering in a corner, awaiting her fate. With a slight bound Burrhea was upon the mare in an instant. A blow of his paw threw her over on the ground; his teeth were fastened in her neck, and he drank her blood greedily. It was simple butchery; for there was no resistance.

“It will make Burrhea only the more savage,” said the king, rubbing his hands gleefully. The European courtiers assented; and the female attendants, ignorant of the language, but certain that the king was pleased, were mightily pleased too. They exchanged glances of approbation and of satisfaction ere they turned again to watch the proceedings in the court-yard.

Burrhea might have been from three to five minutes enjoying his draught of blood—not more—his head turned towards the man-eater all the time,

and his eyes for the most part fixed on him. The man-eater, on his side, gave no indications of uneasiness. An impatient snort or two escaped him ; that was all. With protruded neck and cocked ears, and glaring eyeballs, and twitching tail, he watched his enemy intently, still standing in an easy attitude of attention, as if prepared for immediate action.

At length Burrhea was satisfied, or else no more blood was forthcoming ; and taking his claws out of the dead animal, and shaking himself as he did so, he began to go stealthily round the court-yard, like a cat stealing a march on a rat. He made no noise whatever. The large paws were placed one after the other upon the ground, the soft ball of the foot preventing any sound. Slowly were they raised and depressed ; whilst the long back as slowly made its way forwards,—now raised at the shoulders, now at the hind-quarters, as the legs were moved,—the skin glancing backwards and forwards as if hardly belonging to the bones and muscles beneath it. It was not a scene to be forgotten : the king and his attendant females gazing intently above ; the European courtiers straining with eyes and ears to catch every movement and every sound ; the man-eater in the centre of the court-yard slowly turning as the tiger turned, his head and ears and neck ever the same ; the tiger stealing along, so cat-like in aspect, and yet *so gigantic in strength*. Not a sound was audible *but the grating* of the man-eater's feet, as they

were raised and lowered again,—not a sound other ; but all was mute expectation and anxious gazing.

At length the tiger bounded with the rapidity of lightning upon his enemy ; the horse was fully prepared. It had evidently been Burrhea's intention to seize the head and fore-quarters ; but the man-eater was too adroit for that ; and, by a quick diving motion of his head and shoulders, had received his antagonist upon his muscular haunches behind. The claws sank deeply into the flesh, whilst the hind-feet of the tiger made a grasp or two at the fore-legs of the horse ; but there was no time to secure his position. The man-eater lashed up with his iron heels into the air with tremendous vigour, and in a moment Burrhea was sprawling on the ground, not at all the better for his attack. We could hardly perceive, however, that he had been thrown upon his back,—partly against the bamboo-railing, partly on the ground,—when he was on his legs again, gyrating as before, moving stealthily round as if nothing had happened. With an indignant snort the man-eater resumed his former position, and awaited another spring, his muscular haunches bearing evidence in their lacerated skin, and in the gouts of blood which disfigured them, of the sharpness and strength of the tiger's claws.

" Burrhea will kill him yet !" exclaimed the king, turning to the nearest European.

" Undoubtedly, your majesty," said the courtier.

Cat-like did Burrhea pace round and round again, his broad round head ever turned towards his wary antagonist. Each foot with its brawny paw was lifted and lowered again in succession, noiselessly as before, whilst the beautifully-streaked hide played over the bones and muscles freely. With distended nostrils and flashing eyes, the man-eater watched again as intently as ever, exactly in the same position as formerly,—the head and neck lowered and protruded; the ears cocked rigidly; the eyes fixed in a glazing stare at the stealthily-gliding tiger; and one fore-foot ever slightly advanced, to admit, doubtless, of that rapid diving and thrusting forward of the shoulder and head, by which he had formerly succeeded in getting his antagonist upon his hind-quarters.

For fully eight or ten minutes did this monotonous circling of Burrhea continue, the man-eater ever facing him and gazing intently, an angry snort now and then bursting from the horse as he turned. Burrhea opened his huge jaws widely at times, and licked up the drops of blood which still clung to them; and once (but once only) he paused for a moment over the dead mare, as if meditating a second draught. But the irresolution was only momentary, and the monotonous walk was continued.

At length the decisive moment arrived again. Burrhea was standing almost over the carcass of the

dead mare, when he sprang once more,—sprang so suddenly, that we in the gallery started at the sight, expecting it though we were; and more than one of the attendants on the king gave forth a stifled exclamation of alarm. There was no premonitory growl, or display of any kind. It was as if by galvanic agency the tiger had been suddenly lifted into the air in the course of his monotonous gyration.

Man-eater was not taken by surprise, however. His head was ducked still lower than before; his fore-quarters seemed to glide under the springing assailant; and again were Burrhea's claws dug deeply into his haunches; but further over on this occasion than on the former. The broad round head of the tiger projected for an instant beyond the the tail of the horse, whilst his hind-claws were sunk deeply into the man-eater's breast. For an instant we saw him quivering unsteadily in that position, crouching with his belly on the horse's back, clinging to his prey for an instant, but only for any instant. Again did the ferocious stallion lash up with his hind-feet, almost as if he would throw himself over on his back. His iron heels came with crushing force against the jaw of Burrhea, and in a moment the tiger was sprawling helplessly upon the ground, once more stretched upon his back.

It was but for an instant, however, that Burrhea thus lay; but, when he resumed his feet, and began running round the bamboo enclosure, it was quite

apparent that it was no longer to attack again, but to escape. His jaw was broken ; and, with his tail between his legs, he cried out loudly with pain as he ran round, not unlike a whipped spaniel. The man-eater watched him, as before, intently, evidently fearful of a *ruse*, and finding it difficult to keep up with his rapid motion. But it was no *ruse*: Burrhea was looking eagerly for some method of escape, crying almost piteously as he did so. " His jaw is broken," was whispered by some of the male servants below, who watched him from the verandah. The sound reached our gallery, and the king heard it.

" Burrhea's jaw is broken !" he exclaimed to us ;
" shall we let him escape ?"

" As your majesty pleases," was our answer.

The signal was given—the door of the cage was opened, the bamboos opposite to it raised,—and Burrhea rushed in to bury himself in the furthest corner.

Proudly did the man-eater snort and paw when he found himself thus victor. He first scampered up to the mare, and snuffed there a moment ; and then, spurning her with his foot, with head aloft and tail arched, he trotted to one point and another of the bamboo railing, as if anxious to get at the attendant servants. His blood was up ; and tigers or men, he did not mind which were his assailants now, or which he assailed.

" Let another tiger be set at him," shouted the

king to the natives, after he had watched him for a moment or two. "Damn him; I will have my revenge for his destroying Burrhea;" the latter observation was addressed to us, the attendant Europeans, and was in English. We rubbed our hands, smiled, said it was most just, bowed, and awaited further sport.

"That was a terrible blow he struck with his hind legs," said the king.

"It was a tremendous blow, your majesty. I heard it sounding on Burrhea's jaw-bone," was the answer of one of our little company.

The keeper of the tigers here interposed. A message was brought to ask if he might venture into the presence of his majesty.

"Let him come," was the kingly order.

The keeper of the tigers approached.

"May it please your majesty's greatness, but the tigers were all fed two hours ago," said he; "but the best we have, your majesty shall see in the courtyard in a moment."

"And why were they fed two hours ago, you scoundrel?" asked the king.

"May it please the royal greatness of your majesty, but that was the ordinary time for feeding, and they are fed daily," said the poor man, as he salaamed lowly, trembling in every limb.

"You shall go in to the man-eater yourself, you slave, if this tiger does not attack him."

The tiger's cage was soon after in the verandah ; and all eyes were turned eagerly towards it. The keeper of the tigers withdrew with no pleasant anticipations, be sure of it ; for what the king said, he would think little of doing.

Wine, which had been ordered when Burrhea beat his retreat, was now brought ; and the king pledged his guests in a brimming tumbler of iced claret. The drink was refreshing, because it was so cool ; for the court-yard was oppressively hot, at least to us the Europeans of the party. As for the king, the attendant women fanned him, by gently waving around him the bushy fan formed of the peacock's tail. It was a pretty and a graceful sight to see the finely-turned arms, naked to the shoulder, with a jewelled bracelet or two on the wrist and above the elbow, waving about as the fans moved upwards and downwards, or from side to side,—the fair fanners taking care not to interrupt the king's view as they gracefully put the air in motion.

The tiger's cage was brought, and placed in the verandah opposite the portion of the bamboo railing, which could be raised at pleasure. A passage was made, and a tiger came leisurely forth and surveyed the court-yard. He stood for a moment irresolute on the threshold, as if doubtful about advancing ; but a spear's point, dexterously administered behind, left him doubtful no longer, and he scampered into the enclosure. The bamboo railing was let down ; the

door of the cage was shut again ; and the tiger leisurely surveyed his intended antagonist. After gazing for a moment at the man-eater, who turned to face him, he went up to the dead mare, licked a drop or two of blood from the neck, and then gazed at the man-eater again, who stood as before, on the defensive.

This tiger was somewhat larger than Burrhea, but not so beautifully streaked. There was something, too, more light and graceful about every movement of Burrhea. In fact, this fellow was evidently quite a plebeian, with huge muscular development and shuffling gait. Perhaps, however, he only wanted the stimulus of hunger to make him active and graceful as Burrhea had been.

The man-eater stood, as I have said, upon the defensive, at the side of the court-yard, opposite to that at which the tiger had entered. For his part, however, the tiger seemed to have a very incorrect idea of the reason why he was placed in his present position,—he evidently did not understand what was expected of him ; for, squatting down upon the mare, keeping his face like a cautious soldier to his doubtful friend the man-eater, he proceeded to tear up the dead animal leisurely, exhibiting a strength of claw, of limb, and of jaw, in doing so, that must have awakened uneasy sensations in the man-eater, if he reflected on his position at all.

“ Remove that carcass,” shouted the king, annoyed ; “ fools that you were to leave it there ! ”

The order was obeyed forthwith. An iron rod or two, heated to redness, drove the tiger away. A noose was passed over the neck of the dead mare, and in a moment it was hoisted out of the arena. The tiger, evidently annoyed at the way in which he had been disturbed in his repast, stretched himself at full length in the middle of the court-yard, licked his lips, and growled at the men in the verandah, looking now at them and now at the man-eater, who still stood prepared for the contest as before.

It was not easy to reach the tiger where he lay. A few ineffectual efforts were made to rouse him with the hot rods ; but they were too short. At length, a spear of portentous dimensions was introduced, and he was struck with it. He bounded to his feet, seized the spear, ran along its length to the bamboo railing, and there tugged valorously at one of the bamboo rails. This was too dangerous a sport to allow him to indulge in, and he was soon dislodged, and sent howling away with the hot irons. He scampered once or twice round the inclosure, man-eater eyeing him intently all the while, and facing him still as he turned in every direction. All the efforts of the attendants were unsuccessful, however, in getting him to assail the horse. He was burnt, and speared, and enraged ; but vented his rage on

the bamboos, and showed his glittering teeth to the men; nothing could induce him, apparently, to attack the man-eater, whilst, on his part, man-eater seemed to have no disposition at all to attack him.

It was an evident palpable failure, and I began to dread that the poor keeper of the tigers would certainly be introduced into the court-yard; but the king had forgotten all about his threat, and shouted out that man-eater was a brave fellow, that they should remove the tiger, and see what the horse could do with three wild buffaloes.

There is, perhaps, no animal so fierce and terrible as the wild buffalo, when thoroughly roused,—heavy, clumsy, and awkward though he be. I have frequently seen him put a good-sized elephant to flight, goring the fugitive terribly.

The cage-door was opened, the bamboos were lifted, and the tiger bounded into his den with infinitely more alacrity than he had shown in getting out of it. There was a pause of a few minutes—the wine circulated in the gallery again—and three uncouth-looking, unwieldy buffaloes were driven into the inclosure beneath, one by one.

With that peculiarly stupid gaze of theirs, their huge heads moving unmeaningly from side to side, they pushed their way on into the middle of the court-yard.

The man-eater retreated as they advanced. Their huge forms disconcerted him not a little. Even the

appearance of the second tiger, after his deadly encounter with the first, had moved him less than the apparition of these uncouth monsters, with their broad flat foreheads, their wide-branching horns, and the ample black rotundities of their figures. He retreated step by step, snorting as he did so ; but more with apprehension than with anger. Like all bullies, he would have rushed headlong at them had he seen any signs of fear ; but their evident want of all terror of him was plainly the cause of his embarrassment.

Huddled confusedly together, the three black brutes thrust their heads to one side and the other in idiotic gaze ; now snuffing vainly at the ground, now watching the attendants in the verandah, now contemplating the pillars of the gallery, and anon inspecting the redoubted man-eater, as if vainly asking by their gaze what possible good could be attained by having them there. As to attacking the horse, the idea evidently never entered their heads. He, however, took courage as he saw them irresolute and uncertain. Pawing the ground first, then snuffing at them with distended nostrils, then advancing a step, then snorting with doubt, he slowly came nearer, step by step, almost inch by inch—they, on their part, paying no heed to his movements, but still crowding together, and tossing their heads about in an eminently ~~calm~~ ^{calm} way.

Step by step, I say, did the man-eater advance. At length his head almost touched the protruding side of the nearest buffalo. He snorted and sniffed, and smelt vigorously as he stretched out his long neck towards the unwieldy brute; the buffalo, for his part, heeding him but little, or not at all. Familiarity breeds contempt, says the old proverb, and certainly it did so in this instance; for, after snorting and sniffing, and smelling at his ease, advancing the while a step or two nearer, man-eater wheeled suddenly round, lashed up furiously behind, and rattled his iron hoofs in gallant style against the ribs of the meditating buffalo. The attack was so sudden, so utterly unlooked for, and so violent withal, that the buffalo was stunned for a moment; his companions shaking their heads in chorus, as if opining that there was something in that.

The king laughed outrageously as he gazed at their confusion.

"The man-eater deserves his life," he shouted out; "let him escape." The order was obeyed forthwith: he was adroitly muzzled, and led forth to his stable, a victor and a conqueror, to end his days in peaceful glory.

"I shall have an iron cage made for him," exclaimed the king; "and he shall be taken care of. By my father's head, but he is a brave fellow."

He had an iron cage made for him—one twice the size of many modern London dining-rooms; and

there, roaming round the walls of his iron house, man-eater exhibited his teeth to admiring visitors, snapped at them valorously, and often showed how he had assaulted the ribs of the buffalo, by playing the same tune on the bars of his cage.

When I left Lucknow, the man-eater was still one of its sights.



CHAPTER VIII.

THE CAPRICE OF DESPOTISM.

Rajah Buktawir Singh—The refectory—Royal wit—Buktawir's ill-advised pleasantry—Arrest—Sentence of death—The Rajah's family—Public disgrace—Interference of the Resident—The iron-cage—Food-riots—The bazaar—A friend in need—Restoration.

OF the various native officers of his court, there was, perhaps, none with whom the king was more familiar than Rajah Buktawir Singh, nominally a general in his majesty's forces. I say *nominally* a general; because the chief military force in Oude,—the only force in the country indeed really formidable,—belonged to the Company, and was under the orders of the resident. Still, the king had his regiments of horse and foot soldiers, clothed and accoutred partly after the Persian fashion, partly after that of the honourable Company. Of these forces there were probably forty or fifty thousand, cavalry, infantry, and artillery; and of these the nawab's son was the commander-in-chief, and Buktawir Singh was "the General." In our parties and entertainments at court, Buktawir was usually addressed as "the General,"—seldom by his name. So fond was the king of practical joking and boyish pranks,—in which Buktawir, on the one side, and the barber on

the other, were zealous proficient— that a spectator, casually introduced, might very probably have supposed the court a school of overgrown children, temporarily released from restraint. Buffoonery of the most silly and ridiculous character was constantly promoted by his majesty's example, and entered into with hearty good-will by Buktawir Singh amongst the native, and the barber amongst the European, attendants.

Yet Buktawir was by no means a man of despicable ability. He was proud of his position at court, and determined to retain it as long as possible. Hence his compliance with the frivolities of his sovereign ; and, with oriental duplicity, he entered into these frivolities as if with his whole heart. There were sound sense and practical experience of life in the man, however, beneath this outer coating of absurdity. He was respected by the natives as a man who knew how to rule, and who understood, too, the difficulties of his position. " The General " he was called ; but, had he been styled chief officer of police, the title would have been more applicable ; for his troops performed little other duty than those similar to what we are accustomed to see performed by police in England,—little other except that attendance upon processions and court pageants which forms so large a portion of the out-of-doors life of an eastern court.

It will be readily understood, therefore, that

Buktawir was a man of high consideration amongst the native community. His wealth, the authority of his family as one of the heads of the Rajpoots, his intimacy with the king, his office,—all conspired to render him a man of note, of influence, and of power. The nawab, or prime minister, was a little envious of the consideration he enjoyed ; but as long as Buktawir was the favoured of the king and the barber, he had little to fear from the envy of the nominal prime minister. They professed, of course, to be the best of friends. Buktawir and the nawab embraced and praised each other, salaamed, and uttered high-sounding terms of adulation and courtesy, with all that attention to etiquette for which the natives of Hindustan are remarkable ; and yet the nawab was a Mussulman, and “ the General ” a Hindu.

We had been witnessing some sport in one of the king's numerous country-palaces in the neighbourhood of Lucknow. Wearied with the monotony of animals tearing each other to pieces, and of victories gained by bloodthirsty wild beasts, we had retired to a small refectory which adjoined that portion of the park in which we happened to be at the time. Iced claret and a biscuit or two were pleasant and refreshing after the labour of gazing at renewed combats. The king was in great vein, and joked and joked again with unbounded hilarity ; Buktawir, as usual, accommodating himself readily to the

royal humour, laughing at witless sallies, and professing to enjoy hilariously the lively boisterousness of "majesty."

At length it became time to leave the refectory, as the hour for lunch drew near, although still early in the day. The attendant *suvarrs* or retinue were called; the captain of the body-guard mustered them in the usual order, and information was brought that all was ready. The king rose from the table,—he was dressed in his favourite European costume,—thrust his right hand into his hat, and, elevating it on his arm, allowed it to swing round on his thumb as he held it aloft. Everything was as usual, no signs of a storm brewing in any quarter; we had *so* left the refectory, there and elsewhere, often before. It was a habit of his majesty, when pleased, to swing his black European hat round on his raised hand, the hand being thrust into it, and thus supporting it. I was only a few paces from him as he walked forwards; Buktawir was near me. We were all rising to gain the door, after the king, without order or ceremony; for so he willed it in these friendly meetings.

At length, as the king still twirled his hat, advancing,—there being a pause in the conversation,—he contrived to thrust his thumb out through the top of his hat. Like other hats, it had probably been made rather to sell than for wear,—although his majesty was somewhat particular to have every-

thing of the best ; or, having been frequently subjected to the same rough usage before, the top had become injured. However it was, certain it is that he turned to us with his thumb stuck out at the top, laughing as he did so, and expecting us, of course, to laugh too ; which also, of course, we, like obedient courtiers, dutifully did. Buktawir cried out forthwith, in Hindustani,—the *double entendre* being equally apt in both languages :—

“ There’s a hole in your majesty’s crown.”

It was evidently said impulsively, without premeditation, as a piece of wit ; but unfortunately the efforts of the king’s father and family to exclude him from the throne, in order to raise thereto his brother, had made his majesty excessively sensitive of any remark upon his crown. Had it not been for the Company and the resident, he would never have worn it. Yet at another time, and in a different mood, the observation might have passed unnoticed.

The king’s face became changed as he heard the remark. The joyous hilarity of a moment before vanished at once, and a dark frown brooded over his countenance. His keen black eyes shone fiercely as he turned round to me—I happened to be the nearest to him at the moment—

“ Did you hear the traitor ? ” he asked, in a voice husky with rage ; for his rage swelled, like his hilarity, in sudden gusts.

“ I did, your majesty,” was the beginning of my

reply ; but before I could utter any more, he had shouted out to the captain of the body-guard :—

“ Take that man into custody forthwith. Go, Rooshun ” (to the prime minister), “ and take off his head.”

It was a moment of appalling consternation. The king had absolute power of life and death over all the natives not in the service of the Company—absolute, unquestioned power ; and such was his disposition, that any attempt to thwart his rage then would but have rendered it more violent and deadly. The captain of the body-guard—a European officer—and the prime minister, both advanced to Buktawir, who stood with bent head, and hands extended before him palm to palm, in the ordinary attitude of obedience. He said not a word.

“ The commands of the ‘ refuge of the world ’ shall be obeyed,” said the prime minister, who, although apparently on the most friendly terms with Buktawir, was evidently not displeased at his office. The rise and fall of men in courts, ruled by a capricious despot, are too sudden to cause much surprise in the breasts of those accustomed to such courts.

“ Buktawir is *my* prisoner,” said the captain, leading him off, and giving us, his European associates, a meaning look as he went out,—a look that said, “ Perform *your* part ; I shall perform mine for the wretched man.”

The king dashed down his hat on the ground, and stamped on it as Buktawir was led out, his anger still raging fiercely ; for all that I have described was, of course, but the work of a moment.

“ What would the king of England do to the man who insulted him thus ? ” he asked, again turning to me, with a countenance horrible from the working of rage. He stamped as he asked the question.

“ His majesty would have him arrested as your majesty has done,” was my reply ; “ and after trial he would be dealt with as was decided.”

“ So shall I do ! ” he exclaimed, continuing his advance towards the door slowly, and quite forgetful that the order had already been given for his execution.

“ I shall inform Rooshun of your majesty’s commands,” said I, bowing as I passed him.

They were already in the saddle ; Buktawir between two of the horse-soldiers, and the captain in advance, whilst the nawab rode behind the troop. I informed him of what the king had said ; and Rooshun did not thank me for the information, in his heart, although his reply was, that he had trusted in the clemency of “ the refuge of the world.” There were many attendants near enough to hear ; and the reply was intended as much for their ears as for mine. As for Buktawir, he too must have heard and understood what I said ; for it was in Hindustani, and loud enough for him to hear ; but he did not

much as by turning his head indicate that he had heard it. Such caution men learn in courts.

“Buktawir shall certainly die, — no power on earth shall prevent him dying; his head shall be cut off before it is dark,” said the king to his friend the barber, as he ascended his elephant. No one ventured to say he should not. We, however, the European portion of his majesty’s *suite*, knew full well that if the resident could be got to interfere, the unfortunate man’s life was certainly safe, whatever might become of his property.

From the park in which this scene had occurred to the Goomty was but a distance of a few miles. The floating bridge, a huge flat-bottomed boat, or rather raft, with protecting sides, received us, elephants, horses, and all, just as we were; and in a few minutes we were landed on the Lucknow side of the river. This floating-bridge was reserved for the special use of his majesty and suite, and was always ready at one side or other of the river to receive its accustomed burden. An awkward primitive sort of contrivance it was; but then it was *exclusive*, and that tended much to make it prized and respected. For ordinary people there was the bridge of boats; the vulgar, but far more convenient means of transit from shore to shore, save in the middle of the day for an hour or two, when the *central portion* of it was opened, in order to permit the *river-traffic* to be carried on.

Arrived at the palace, his majesty seemed to be more reasonable and less excited. We were all anxious to know his intentions with respect to Buktawir Singh. The subject was delicately introduced as we stood leave-taking, in a friendly way, by an influential courtier.

"He shall not die," said the king, "until a regular investigation has been made into the matter."

With this assurance we were fain to be content; although it was not without fear and trembling for the consequences that we left the king to his native attendants. There was a large fortune to be confiscated, and to be divided amongst them. They were ever ready to counsel death and confiscation when the object was rich or powerful. The captain of the body-guard was deputed as the most proper person to inform the resident of the matter; but that gentleman did not well see how he could interfere,—it was an alleged case of treason by a native in no way subordinate to the Company; he, the resident, had no excuse for interfering whatever.

As we left the palace, those of us belonging to the king's household visited the unfortunate Buktawir. He was thrust into a mean outhouse, formerly in the occupation of a servant of low caste, in the neighbourhood of the palace. Here he was guarded by two native sentries. The place itself, to him, a man of the highest rank and caste, was

degradation and punishment enough ; but, when we entered, the condition of the miserable victim of caprice was lamentable to witness.

The only furniture the place contained was a rough native bed, such as is used by native servants, called a *charpoy*, that is, a framework of rough wood raised on four short legs, and with coir cords passed from side to side above to support a mat or mattress. No mat or mattress was here, however. Everything was done according to the king's order, we heard, communicated to the captain of the body-guard by the nawab. All the garments of the disgraced chief had been removed,—his richly-ornamented turban, his magnificent Oriental dress, his tulwar or sword, his pistols, his Cashmere scarf, used as a belt,—all had been removed. With a scanty cloth tied round his loins,—a cloth such as the lowest of the labouring classes wear,—he was lying, when we entered, on this uncomfortable couch, otherwise naked.

“What I said,” said he, as we spoke to him, “was said in utter unconsciousness, in foolish playfulness. The king knows I never intrigued against him when his father and his family conspired to deprive him of his crown. I shall die, gentlemen ; I know I shall die ; Rooshun is not my friend ; but, oh, good Englishmen, preserve my family from disgrace. Surely, his excellency the resident will protect them, if you ask him. I am a man,—I can

bear torture and death ; but my wives and children,—my aged bed-ridden father,—my wives, that have never seen the face of man save of their relations,—my children, who are all of tender years,—what will become of them when I am gone ? Good gentlemen, promise me to say a kind word for them.”

We gave him all the assurances we could. There was something poetical about his language,—in the energy of his sorrow and excitement. The whole scene was a touching one ; and, surrounded though we were by the dark purlieus of a native court, with all their horrid traditions of cruelty and bloodshed, tears from the eyes of more than one of us coursed down our cheeks as we listened to the wretched man.

“I have preserved this one jewel,” said he ; “they have taken all the rest.” It was a signet-ring containing a large emerald of great value, which he usually wore on his finger. He put it into the hands of the most influential member of our little party. “Should my family come to want,—should they only lose their property, and be otherwise uninjured,—perhaps you will sell this for them. Do, good Englishman ; but, oh, try and save them from the torture and disgrace ; and the blessing of the widows and the orphans will be yours.”

Our interview was not a prolonged one. We reassured him as much as we could—promised our interference to the utmost. We left him calm and

resigned. As to his own life, he never for a moment thought it would be saved; for he had heard the order given for his execution, and he attributed the delay simply to an intention of inflicting torture upon him. He had made up his mind to this. "He knew the king better than we did," said he, as he shook his head mournfully. He had seen the most excruciating tortures inflicted upon men for less than he had done.

The promised investigation was to be held in the evening. We were to dine as usual with his majesty afterwards. Till then we took our way to our several homes, full of sad thoughts at the spectacle we had witnessed, at the scenes which had occurred that morning.

As we assembled in the ante-room of the palace that evening, the captain of the body-guard met us, and told us of what the resident had said. "God only knows what will be the result of all this,—would to heaven I were in any other position than that I now fill!" he exclaimed vehemently; "the poor old bed-ridden father of Buktawir, his wives and children too, have all been arrested, and thrust into the same degrading prisons." A native *peon* informed us that it would be half an hour before his majesty was ready to receive us. "Let us visit the family together," said we in a breath; "we can give them consolation; the resident will surely protect them." It was no idle curiosity, but a mission's

mercy, that took us to the court-yard where the wretched family were imprisoned.

I have witnessed many heart-rending spectacles in the course of a long and somewhat varied experience ; but I have no recollection of any other which affected me more deeply or painfully than the sight of this unfortunate collection of women and children. They were all treated as Buktawir had been treated, —stripped of their fine clothes and their ornaments, —given only the same scanty covering that he had been allowed ;—there they were, cowering like sheep and lambs awaiting the slaughter,—the old bed-ridden father, with his wrinkled skin and spare frame, through which the skeleton could be clearly distinguished, as the bones protruded in all quarters ; —and he was weeping,—weeping not for his own sufferings or dishonour, but for the woes of his son and of his son's wives. Young, delicately-moulded women, who had been nursed in every luxury, and brought up tenderly, whose faces had never been exposed before to the eyes of men,—there they cowered, huddled together, with their children, exposed to the rude gaze and brutal jests of the native soldiery who were scattered about the court-yard. One clasped her infant to her breast, and seemed to find some satisfaction in all her woe in fulfilling a mother's duties. Another sat in silent misery, with downcast face and drooping form, a Hindu Niobe. No sculptor could have imagined

forms of more exquisite mould than two of them presented ; whilst their colour was that brunette tint which captivates so much when contrasted with the jet-black locks of hair common to the regions of the sun. They had unloosed their dark tresses, that these emblems of sorrow might form some sort of covering for their shoulders ; and they looked all the more lovely in consequence.

When they heard that we had come as comforters, and friends of Buktawir, the cowering fear which had formerly possessed them gave way to passionate entreaty and fervent expressions of thanks. The women and children threw themselves at our feet, and begged our intercession for the doomed culprit. It was pitiable to see them grovelling on the ground before us in all the agony of fear, and in all the abasement of commingled fear and love. It was not for themselves they sought protection and succour, but for him whose incautious words had brought them into that miserable position. Truly, if Hindustan is ever saved, it will be by the virtues of its women ; for more honourable, more honest-minded, more nobly-endowed female humanity is not to be found in the most highly-civilized regions of the earth than amongst the zenanahs of India. Europeans usually see the low and the vile only, and they judge them all by those ; just as if a foreigner were to form his estimate of the women of England from those he sees crowding the streets of its large

towns in gaudy colours and brazen boldness when the light of day has gone, and the brilliant flickering of gas-light has taken its place.

We promised, we re-assured, we calmed, we comforted these sorrowing creatures, old and young. We had ground for consolation ; for the resident had sent for the nawab, and had declared that whatever Buktawir might be guilty of, his family was innocent ; and that there must not be any wholesale slaughter or indiscriminate torturing. The Company might permit the king to slay here and there ; but the murder of a whole family in cold blood, the torture of unoffending women and children in groups, was more than they would permit. It might come to the ears of Europe ; and then what a pretty piece of business it would be for the honourable Company and its governments in India !

We had not long to remain with the family of Buktawir. The king would have been furious did he find us missing, and learn that we had been comforting the traitor and his brood. We hurried from the court-yard, more disposed than ever to exert ourselves in behalf of the doomed general.

The interference of the resident in behalf of his family was probably the saving of Buktawir Singh's life. The nawab was thoroughly frightened when the great saheb himself informed him that he and the Company should hold him (Rooshun) responsible for anything that befel the innocent family of the

condemned rajah. It did not suit either the convenience of the prime minister or the prospects of the European barber to be brought into collision with the resident ; and, at the council held that evening, every voice was loudly or earnestly raised for clemency.

“ Let it be so, then,” said the king, wearied of the matter ; “ let the traitor escape with life. Let his property, however, be confiscated ; and let him be kept in a cage in perpetual imprisonment, banished from Lucknow.”

Such was the sentence ; and the nawab was to see to its execution. A Mussulman chief, from the north of Oude, was to set off on the morrow, in returning to his own district. It was decided that Buktawir should go with him as his prisoner. But this was not enough.

“ He must be disgraced,” said the king, “ as rajah never was disgraced before. Let his turban and his dress be brought—his sword and his pistols.”

All was done as the king ordered. According to Hindu ideas, an indignity offered to the turban is the same as if offered to the owner and ordinary wearer of it. A *mehter*, or servant of the lowest class and rank—a sort of house-scavenger—was ordered into the presence ; and there and then, in presence of us all, defiled the unconscious turban with hearty good-will, to the king's great satisfaction. With hearty good-will, I say, did the *mehter* perform

his part of the degradation ; for, once defiled, none but himself would touch the turban or the clothes. They became from that moment his own property ; and, when dried, doubtless ornamented on gala-days afterwards himself and his wife.

Next came the sword. It was broken into a hundred pieces by a sturdy blacksmith introduced for the purpose. The pistols came next. The son of Vulcan was about to smash them with his weighty hammer, when he thought of looking to see if they were loaded. They *were* loaded. He paused. The king observed the action, and suspected the cause.

“ Are they loaded ? ” he asked vehemently.

“ May the ‘ refuge of the world ’ look benevolently on his slave—the pistols *are* loaded,” was the blacksmith’s reply.

“ Yah, Hyder ! but said I not well the man was a traitor of the worst stamp ? how say you, gentlemen, now ! ” exclaimed his majesty, turning to us, “ was this an unpremeditated matter ? You hear,—the scoundrel’s pistols are loaded ? ”

“ It was but his duty as a general to have his pistols loaded to defend your majesty,” said the tutor firmly.

“ Ha ! say you so ? then, by Allah, I shall see if others think that a part of his duty. Let the captain of the body-guard be called. I want him instantly.”

The life of the unfortunate man hung again in

the balance, to be decided by the slightest breath of air. We were cautioned not to intimate by look or sound anything to the captain as he entered. We knew that he wished well to Buktawir, as we did ; and yet a word from him might now be the means of bringing down destruction on the accused ! The captain entered, advancing towards the king with the usual salaam.

“ Captain ——,” said the king, “ was it the duty of Rajah Buktawir Singh, that was—but rajah and singh no longer—to wear his pistols loaded or unloaded ? ”

A life hung most probably on the answer. We awaited it in breathless expectation. But the scene had been sufficient to inform the captain of the circumstances of the case ;—the waiting blacksmith—the king’s earnest manner—the pistols deposited on the table—our anxious countenances ;—and he gave his reply without hesitation.

“ It is unquestionably the duty of the commander-in-chief and the general of your majesty’s forces to be prepared for any sudden danger that might assail your majesty. Their pistols would be useless unloaded.”

“ Let them be fired off and broken up, and then scattered to the winds,” said the king, seeing that he was foiled again.

That evening the dinner passed as usual. The viands were criticised, the wine circulated, exactly as

on other evenings ; no one seemed to think for a moment of the unhappy family that awaited in one of the adjoining court-yards the sentence of banishment and imprisonment. The circumstance was not even once alluded to in the course of the entertainment. As for the king, he quaffed his champagne, and watched the amusements, with his usual hilarity ; his conscience seemed quite at rest, his remarks were full of attempted wit, of boyish extravagance, of frivolity, or worse, as on other evenings.

The next morning the resident himself visited the wretched family of Buktawir Singh, assuring them of his interest in the case, and his determination to shield them from further disgrace. They blessed " the great saheb," as grateful women and children only can bless ; his visit was balm to their souls, an assurance that they were not utterly deserted.

The very same day Buktawir Singh and his family departed as prisoners in the train of the northern rajah. The alleged culprit himself was put into a large wild-beast cage, and otherwise somewhat hardly and harshly dealt with ; but his family was more tenderly treated. The resident's interference had done wonders with the natives of all classes. Rich and poor, princes and sepoy, fear the *Koompany Bahādor* (the Honourable Company), and the resident, as its represensative. To them this Koompany Bahādor is a terrible myth, that awes and terrifies. Amongst the very ignorant in India, it is

no uncommon impression that the *Koompany* is a frightful monster of portentous power and energy, dwelling in a far-off land, but able to see all that takes place in India ;—whether god, man, angel, or devil, they cannot say, but something awful and frightful unquestionably.

Buktawir Singh was gone, and we heard no more about him, save that his relatives amply provided for his wants ; and that the chief in whose care he was, found it his interest to treat him well. It is probable that, like most wealthy natives, he had large sums of money so secured and concealed, that when his property was confiscated, these remained untouched. Certain it is, that although Rooshun had been diligent enough in the confiscation, yet whatever Buktwair wanted, he had money to procure ; whatever little piece of bribery was to be done, either in the king's retinue or in that of the resident, ample funds were forthcoming for the purpose.

That year—for I may as well bring Buktwair's story to a conclusion at once—that year there was a general dearth in Oude. The scarcity of rice caused prices to go up considerably above the average, not of that alone, the staple of native food, but of all other kinds of food. Discontent was the consequence, and there were troubles in Lucknow. The bazaar-owners were loudly accused by the poor of having produced an artificial scarcity, and riots occurred in consequence. When the king made his appearance

in public, petitions against the speculators were thrown into his *howdah*, or offered to him when he was on horseback by kneeling sufferers. It was annoying,—these petitions became a bore,—and he made his appearance but seldom in the city.

A year had rolled away since the disgrace of Buktawir Singh, and still quietness was not restored; the petitions were still presented; his majesty was still bored to death with long-winded accounts of starving families and outraged property.

“There is evidently something wrong,” said the king at length one day, at the durbar; “I never saw this discontent continue so long in Lucknow before.”

The nawab hinted something about the crops.

“Bah, Rooshun, old woman that you are, don’t talk of the crops to me,” quoth his majesty; “I tell you there’s something wrong. The later crops have been excellent. What do you think about it, master?”

“I think, your majesty, that there must be some mismanagement in the bazaars that requires looking into,” said the tutor.

“Wallah, but I agree with you, master; let us go this very evening and inquire into it. Let us all go in disguise, as the caliph used to do in Bagdad. I will go too; it will be both useful and agreeable.”

The king had said it. He had got the idea thoroughly into his head, and nothing would turn

him from it. Go into the bazaars we must in disguise, majesty and all. What we should do when we got there, or how effect any good, was never thought of. The king was soon ready, equipped as a common European ; Rooshun was soon similarly transformed. Two of the European members of the household dressed themselves in like manner. The others were to lounge about the bazaar in the neighbourhood of the king, but not to appear to be of his party. The nawab and the captain of the body-guard both took measures against any surprise or sudden violence. The king's own family would be the first to seize the opportunity, did they discover the disguise ; and there was no knowing but desperadoes might be sent to pick a quarrel with, and to murder him. To prevent any such tragical occurrence, both the nawab and the captain of the guard, unknown to each other, ordered sepoy and attendants, well armed, to follow, in the ordinary dress of Lucknow. Where all men went armed, their being so would not excite suspicion.

It must not be supposed that so many entering the bazaars, and keeping within a short distance of each other, would be likely to cause remark. So crowded are the eastern bazaars in the evening, that one must push his way along. They are always full ; and the roads being narrow, many people might easily traverse them together, without the fact of their being together awakening observation.

On we went through the oily steaming crowd, redolent of unsavoury odours. Fierce Rajpoots and Patans, with their tulwars and shields jingling by their sides and on their backs, elbowed us and scowled. Well-bearded Mussulmans, pious and devout, observed, as we passed, it was no place for sahebs. Sleek Hindus smiled, and tempted us with their wares, flattering us in affected humility with their words. At length we drew near a money-changer's, where there was more room. His coins lay scattered in little heaps over the large trays that served as tables. His portly figure was squatted in greasy sleekness in the midst. He sat on his bended legs, after the manner of money-changers in the east, and tailors in the west. Two sturdy attendants lounged at a little distance, sufficiently far from the coins to prevent their helping themselves, sufficiently near to watch them and protect.

A merchant of some consequence, judging by his dress, approached the money-changer, and exchanged greetings. They salaamed with cordiality.

"Another attack on the rice-stores this morning, Mhadub," said the new-comer.

"Bad times, bad times," said Mhadub, shaking his head gloomily, as he looked towards our party, now advancing, to see if we needed his services. The king looked significantly round as he heard the remark and the reply; he would hear more, so he stopped at a neighbouring stall, as if to look at a

native purchasing some *parun*.* We went a little further on and examined some swords.

“It’s very hard that a merchant can’t sell his goods at what he likes, without being in danger of getting his property destroyed,” observed the new-comer again.

“Very hard, very hard, indeed; it wasn’t so in times past,” said the money-changer, shaking his head again; “there’s nothing doing now. Change for a gold mohur? Certainly, my lord. Fifteen rupees, eleven annas, and four pie—four annas, eight pie *dustooree*; some people charge five annas, but I only four and eight pie. Bad times, bad times, as you say, Baboo.”

“It wasn’t so when Rajah Buktawir was the king’s minister; he kept the bazaars in order,” said the Baboo.

The king started. He listened attentively, however, still, and advanced nearer to examine some brass drinking-cups.

“He did, Baboo, he did,” replied the money-changer; “Rajah Buktawir kept the bazaar in order, as you say:—bad times, bad times.”

The Baboo passed on; he had said his say. I thought at the moment, and to this day I still think, he was sent there on purpose to say it,—that some friend or relative of Buktawir’s, hearing of the king’s

* A leaf with spices and a kind of lime rolled in it, used for chewing by the natives, as sailors chew tobacco.

procedure, had taken this means of reminding his majesty of the disgraced general.

The king returned to the palace ruminating deeply. A new idea had been put into his head; and, like all men who totally want originality, he caught firm hold of it, and kept it there. He thought only of Buktawir Singh, and what he had heard in the bazaar.

Two months after that, Rajah Buktawir Sing was in his old place at court, resuming his duties and reinstated in his honours as if nothing had occurred. The next harvest was abundant; and when I left Lucknow, Rajah Buktawir was still "the General," as before—in great favour with the king, nay, in greater favour than ever.

CHAPTER IX.

THE KING'S HAREM

Female sepoy—The Begum's revolt—Female *bearers*—Slaves—Mrs. Meer Hassan Ali's account—Eunuchs—The rooms of the harem—Seclusion of its inmates—Ignorance of nature—Dress—Amusements—The Padshah Begum's procession—Silver-sticks, troops, the kettle-drums.

WE of the rougher sex never had an opportunity of seeing the interior of the harem, or witnessing the private life of its inmates. Notwithstanding this, however, we had accurate information enough on the subject. European ladies were allowed to visit the king's wives; the eunuchs, a privileged class, were accustomed to intrude without ceremony upon the privacy of the native ladies, and these eunuchs were constantly to be met with about the court. We were not left therefore to conjecture—much was hidden we were sure—but much also was patent to us, made fully intelligible and plain to us by the reports we heard from others.

Of the living curiosities of the palace there were none the account of which will appear more strange to European ears than the female sepoy. I had seen these men-like women pacing up and down before the various entrances to the female apartments for many days before I was informed of their real character. I regarded them simply as a dimin-

tive race of soldiers, with well-wadded coats. There was nothing but their height and this fulness of the chest to distinguish many of them from other sepoys; and one is so accustomed to see soldiers in England with coats stuffed so as to make their wearers resemble pouter pigeons, that I took little heed of the circumstance.

These women retained their long hair, which they tied up in a knot upon the top of the head, and there it was concealed by the usual shako. They bore the ordinary accoutrements of sepoys in India—a musket and bayonet, cross-belts and cartridge-boxes, jackets and white duck continuations, which might be seen anywhere in Bengal. Intended solely for duty in the palace as guardians of the harem, they were paraded only in the court-yards, where I have seen them going through their exercise just like other sepoys. They were drilled by one of the native officers of the king's army, and appeared quite familiar with marching and wheeling, with presenting, loading, and firing muskets, with the fixing and unfixing of bayonets—in fact, with all the ordinary detail of the barrack-yard. Whether they could have gone through the same manœuvres in the field with thousands of mustachoeed sepoys around them, I cannot tell—probably not. They had their own corporals and serjeants; none of them, I believe, attained a higher rank than that of sergeant.

Many of them were married women, obliged to

quit the ranks for a month or two at a time occasionally. They retained their places, however, as long as possible ; and it was not until the fact of their being women was pointed out to me, that I perceived their figures were not always in the proportions allotted to the other sex. I have seen many a sergeant in England, however, whose figure was just as *outré* as those amongst them furthest advanced in pregnancy. Their appearance was a frequent subject of merriment with the king, who usually ended his *badinage* of them, however, by ordering some present to be given to the delinquent—delinquent, properly so called, for there was an express order against such disfigurement, clothed in the plainest language and of the most absolute character, posted up in their barracks.

Of these female sepoys there were in all two companies, of the usual strength, or weakness if the reader will have it so. Once during my residence at Lucknow they were employed by the king against his own mother. I have mentioned elsewhere, that when Nussir's father, Ghazi-u-deen, had resolved that Nussir should not succeed him, he had determined on getting his son into his own power, that, if need were, the youth might be put to death rather than mount the throne. His mother, the Begum, had then fought for him with all the bravery of a hero. She had armed her retainers, incited them by her example, and ultimately succeeded in baffling the

king ; but not until after a bloody contest had taken place, and the resident had been obliged to interfere to prevent further scandal. One would suppose that Nussir would never forget the gratitude due to his heroic mother for her defence of him when he was incapable of defending himself. But as Ghazi had wished to act towards Nussir, so did Nussir wish to act towards his own son. The mother of Nussir took her grandson under her protection, and refused to give him up. The king then ordered her to leave the palace she occupied, and go to another. She suspected his intentions, and refused. Orders and threats would not do—the Begum was not to be intimidated. The king then sent his female sepoys to turn her out ; but her retainers fought with and routed them. The balls firing on either side were whistling over my house at the time, and two or three penetrated at the windows. It was not until I found there was actual danger that I inquired what was the cause of disturbance, and prepared to leave my abode. Such was the state of things in Lucknow, that a few people killed, a few volleys of musketry fired in anger, were scarcely sufficient to rouse our curiosity. Fifteen or sixteen of the Begum's attendants were killed in this attack.

The end of the matter was, that the resident again interfered. The king promised not to molest his mother the Begum, or to touch his infant son, if she would remove to the palace he indicated. The

resident thereupon guaranteed the life of the child, and the Begum departed content. She put more faith in the word of the English gentleman than she would have put in the solemn oaths of the king and all his ministers ! Truly it is not in Europe that one discovers the greatness of England, or the magic power that resides in the name of Englishman.

Notwithstanding the zeal of the old Begum and her maternal heroism, however, the infant boy did not succeed his father. Nussir adopted the fatal expedient of pronouncing him illegitimate, by public proclamation ; nay, even affixed royal notices to that effect on the gates of Lucknow ; and the Indian Government decided that, so stigmatised, the youth could not succeed. When Nussir was poisoned, shortly after the barber was driven out of Lucknow, the old Begum tried force again. She had the residency surrounded with her troops, and the youthful son of Nussir proclaimed. The resident, however, was not to be intimidated. Although in imminent danger of losing his life, he refused to recognise the prince. Orders were sent down to the cantonments for troops. The troops came,—a few discharges of grape-shot amongst the threatening crowd, dispersed them,—and one of the old uncles, whom Nussir had treated so badly, succeeded to the vacant throne. The old Begum and her youthful son, now a young man, are still alive in Lucknow, I believe. *Her object had been a good one, and she had twice suc-*

ceeded by force. In other times and under other circumstances, that old Begum might have written her name largely on the pages of the world's history. All honour to her for her bravery and her heroism ; all honour to the English resident too, Colonel Lowe, whose firmness and intrepidity put an end to what threatened to be a very serious disturbance. The evils resulting from the suppression of the *émeute* were as nothing compared with what would have resulted from its success.

But I have been digressing in all this. I was led into the digression by the female sepoys.

Another class of attendants at the palace peculiar to Lucknow, were the female *bearers*,*—labourers we should call them, perhaps. Their occupation was to carry the palanquins, and various covered conveyances of the king and his ladies into the inner courts of the harem. These female bearers were also under military discipline. They had their officers, commissioned and non-commissioned. The head of them, a great masculine woman, of pleasing countenance, was an especial favourite with the king. The *badinage* which was exchanged between them was of the freest possible character,—not fit for ears polite, of course ; but the extraordinary point in it was, that no one hearing it, or witnessing such scenes, could have supposed it possible that a king and a slave

* A Hindustani, not an English word.

stood before him as the two tongue-combatants. This very chief of the female bearers, I have since heard from one who was in Lucknow at the time, was the poisoner of Nussir, — bribed thereto by some member of the royal family.

Of the slaves in attendance upon the ladies of the harem, there were great numbers, some hereditary, some newly purchased from poor parents, either on account of physical beauty, or from some peculiar talent which they possessed of singing, story-telling, shampooing agreeably, or such like.

That discarded ladies were often made away with in the palace, as in Constantinople of old, I have not the slightest doubt; and these slaves, or the eunuchs, were usually the instruments, I was told. Mrs. Meer Hassan Ali * is able to tell more about these attendants on the harem than I can. They are not found in the court alone, but in every family of distinction in Lucknow.

“The female slaves, although constantly required about the lady’s person, are nevertheless tenderly treated, and have every proper indulgence afforded

* In her *Observations on the Mussulmans of India*. Mrs. Meer Hassan Ali was an English lady, who married a Lucknow noble during a visit he paid to England. She spent twelve years with him in India, and did not allow him to exercise a Moslem’s privilege of a plurality of wives. Returning to England afterwards, on account of her health, she did not again rejoin him. Her book is dedicated “with permission” to the Princess Augusta.

them. They discharge in rotation the required duties of their stations, and appear as much the objects of the lady's care as any other people in her establishment. Slavery with them is without severity; and in the existing state of Mussulman society, they declare women-slaves to be necessary appendages to their rank and respectability. The liberal proprietors of female slaves give them suitable matches in marriage when they have arrived at a proper age, and even foster their children with the greatest care; often granting them a salary, and sometimes their freedom; if required to make them happy. Indeed, generally speaking, the slaves in a Mussulman's house must be vicious and unworthy, who are not considered members of the family." So much for the good lady's idea of slavery in Mussulman families generally. Listen now to an anecdote of slave-life in Lucknow, told with all that suggestive simplicity which usually characterises female authorship. The man who would say as much in plain language would shock the modesty of nervous ladies.

"I have heard of a very beautiful female slave who had been fostered by a native lady of high rank from her infancy. In the course of time, this female slave *had arrived to the honour of being made the companion of her young master*, and still, with the lady's consent, resided with her. Her mistress, indeed, was much attached to her. The freedom of intercourse, occasioned by the slave's exaltation, had

the effect of lessening the young creature's former respect for her still kind mistress, to whom she evinced some ungrateful returns for the many indulgences she had received at her hands. The exact nature of her offences I never heard ; but it was deemed requisite, for the sake of example, in a house where some hundreds of female slaves were maintained, that the lady should adopt some such method of testifying her displeasure towards this pretty favourite as would be consistent with *her present elevated station*. A stout silver chain was therefore made by the lady's orders, and with this the slave was linked to her bedstead a certain number of hours every day, in the view of the whole congregated family of slaves. This punishment would be felt as a degradation by the slave ; not the confinement to her bedstead, however, where she would perhaps have seated herself from choice, had she not been in disgrace, but the chaining in presence of the household."

The European lady has evidently shown the brightest side of the picture,—the darker shadows were perhaps concealed from her eyes. When the slave was ugly and repulsive, instead of being "young" and "pretty," young masters would not be likely to care what kind or amount of punishment was inflicted on them ; and all Mussulman ladies are by no means of the angelic temperament of the mistress of the slave in the foregoing anecdote. Jealousy and spite together, there can be little doubt, will

lead sometimes to cruelty and revenge, even when the object of the jealousy is, like the favoured slave in Mrs. Hassan Ali's narrative, "very beautiful;" nay, even simple anger, when roused in the naturally cruel, will lead to more inhuman treatment than can well be described in plain words. It is not more than eight years ago, for instance, since all Calcutta was roused from its tropical torpor into a state of violent indignation against a Mohammedan lady. Her slave—for slaves there are, in reality, if not in name, in Calcutta itself,—her slave had not heated her hookah properly with the charcoal-burners called *ghools*. She had repeatedly so offended. 'The lady was very wroth. At length, infuriated by anger she had the unhappy wretch thrown upon the ground and held there by other slaves,—by other "servants of the zenanah," the law called them. Whilst thus prostrate, a number of burning *ghools*, properly heated (that is, balls of red-hot charcoal), were thrown over the poor creature, and she was shockingly burnt, so shockingly, that even the indignation of some fellow-slave was roused. The girl died a few days afterwards. The police were informed of the circumstance. The lady was tried as a purdah-lady, condemned, and sentenced to transportation for life. She was then obliged to show her hitherto-concealed countenance; and the reporters of the newspapers were at a loss to give a correct account of her beauty in words. It was something exquisite.

I am free to confess, however, that I heard of many fewer cases of cruelty in the treatment of slaves during my residence in Lucknow than one would suppose probable, considering my intimacy with the native nobility. Floggings and disgraceful punishments there were for slaves of both sexes; but not to anything like the extent prevalent in America, if Mrs. Stowe's pictures of life in the model republic are to be considered genuine and accurate. Whether it was that I felt an antipathy to the class, or was prejudiced against them by the accounts I heard, I cannot now tell; but my impression is, that the greater part of the cruelty practised in the native harems, is to be attributed to the influence and suggestions of the eunuchs. They were usually the inflictors of punishment on the delinquents; and this punishment, whether flogging or torturing, they seemed to inflict with a certain degree of *gusto* and appetite for the employment.

These eunuchs, like the female slaves, are to be found in great numbers in the houses of the Mussulman nobility of Lucknow. There could not have been less than a hundred and fifty of them about the palace; and the chief eunuch,—the principal attendant on the first wife of the king, the Padshah* Begum, a daughter of the King of Delhi,—was a

* Mussulman sovereigns take the title of Padshah, or Padishah (*protector-ruler*). The first wife is therefore the *Padshah Begum*.

man of great influence and importance in Oude. They are usually children stolen for the purpose in Upper India, by those who sell them to the nobles, and are often much in the confidence of the masters whom they serve. "They enjoy many privileges denied to other classes of slaves, and are admitted at all hours and seasons to the zenanahs," says Mrs. Hassan Ali. "They were the usual bath-attendants of the ladies of the harem at court, being preferred for that service to the female slaves."

Many of these unfortunate beings have been advanced to high offices of trust under the Oude government, farming the revenues, for instance, in large districts, and undertaking the management and conduct of important negotiations. Bishop Heber tells a story of one of them, who, being visited by his sovereign, built him a throne of a million of rupees,—a hundred thousand pounds sterling,—and afterwards made him a present of it.*

As the slave, by Mohammedan law, is the absolute property of his master, all the wealth he may acquire is also his master's ; so that whatever sums these eunuchs may accumulate during their lives reverts to their owners on their death. Hence the valuable dresses and jewels heaped upon all classes of slaves, eunuch and other, by their lords. This wealth is but a deposit, lent for the time being to the

* Narrative, &c. vol. ii.

wearer ; for the slave has no heirs, and no legal power to bestow. An instance did once occur, I was told, of a rich eunuch who had long farmed the revenue of a considerable district, and who willed his property away on his death. The appointed heirs lost no time in taking possession of the palace of the deceased eunuch, with all that it contained ; but no sooner did the court become aware of the circumstance, than the sovereign claimed the entire property as his by right. Troops were marched against the offending heirs ; the retainers of the parties in possession fought valiantly in defence ; and it was not until after a severe contest that the palace was surrendered to the king. By a slight application of torture, such of the hordes of gold and silver as remained were discovered, and were all seized by the court ; in all which the strict letter of the law was but adhered to. Indeed, the people of Oude are so accustomed to contests of this kind, that, like the Tipperary boys, they rather like a good row. It prevents their arms becoming rusty for want of use.

But we have been long enough detained by the exterior of the harem and its attendant sepoys, bearers, and eunuchs. Let us boldly lift the curtain, and pass into the interior to inspect it. The ladies, I am sure, will accompany me.

The form of the buildings of the harem does not greatly differ from that of the accessible parts of the

palace. The ordinary oriental model of a house is indeed a square or oblong court-yard, with rooms opening into verandahs surrounding it. If the house consist of two stories, then a gallery runs round the enclosure above, into which the upper rooms open. The apartments are usually raised two or three steps above the level of the court-yard, and consist for the most part of long bare-looking halls, at the end of which small closets are often found, guarded by doors. These closets usually contain valuables of various kinds: dresses, jewellery, expensive ornaments, and such like. It may seem strange to European ears; but doors and windows are usually wanting to these halls, their places being supplied by curtains and apertures. These curtains are called *purdahs*, and hence the common expression in India a *purdah-woman*—that is, one concealed from public gaze—who lives in retirement, seen only by her nearest male relatives, and who travels in shut-up conveyances, often so thickly covered as to prevent the poor prisoner within from seeing anything without. It is from the male portion of the world only that she is thus shut out—with the female of all classes and races she may have unrestricted intercourse.

If one of these *purdah-women*, Hindu or Mussulman, gives evidence in a Company's court, she remains shut up in her palanquin even when within the court of justice. A servant, or near relative,

swears to the identity of the lady within ; and she is *so* examined, never once seen by judge or magistrate, by the accused or the accuser. Seated in her dark box, tailor-fashion, she answers the questions put to her ; the voice is heard, but the mouth which utters the voice is not seen. Of course this system leads to great abuse, but it is absurd to blame the Indian Government on that account ; native customs require the concealment, and native customs are far less easily interfered with than people may suppose.

The court-yard is much used by the ladies of the harem as a place of reception in fine weather. A temporary cloth covering is often stretched over it, and the ground matted. The chief lady sits on her *musnud*, or throne, in the centre, and there receives her visitors, who salaam as they enter. She rises only to the very aged, or to those of higher rank than herself, or to her male relatives. The lords of the creation are truly lords in the East—too often tyrants too. The ladies regard them as a superior order of beings, listen to their words as the child in Europe listens to those of its parents, adopt their views and embrace their opinions with an unhesitating confidence, that bespeaks childlike simplicity and implicit faith. Does some indignant Englishwomen mutter “impossible !” or “they pretend only,” as she reads this ? Let her fancy herself born, brought up, educated, amongst a nation of heathens, who consider the birth of a female child as a positive

misfortune, and the birth of a male child as a proportionably great blessing, and she will have no difficulty in believing my words to be literally true, however lamentable she may regard the fact.

The pleasant prospect of nature is, of course, quite shut out from these cheerful, contented captives. They have never enjoyed a glimpse of a pleasing, extensive landscape. Many of them have never even seen a garden or a river, a grove of trees or an open field. "These flowers are beautiful, very beautiful; how pretty must not the ground be where they grow in great numbers!" is an exclamation which a European lady heard from them frequently. "They will often ask with wonder," she remarks again, "'how do these things grow? How do they look in the ground?'"*

When receiving her visitors within the halls, the chief lady sits nearly in the centre of the apartment on her musnud or throne, which is placed, if possible, near a pillar. None other is allowed a musnud but her. It consists of a large cushion, covered with gold cloth, or embroidered silk, or velvet, and is placed upon a carpet about two yards square. The rank of the lady is usually indicated by the structure and appearance of the carpet and the musnud. In the royal harem, the former was composed of cloth-of-gold, with a deeply-embroidered fringe. Two smaller

* Mrs. Meer Hassan Ali's Observations, vol. i. p. 323.

cushions are also placed upon the larger to support the knees, as the lady sits cross-legged.

To be invited to a seat upon the musnud indicates equality in the visitor, or profound respect in the hostess. Should the visitor be of very superior station, or the hostess anxious to show her the highest possible form of respect, she resigns her cushions altogether, which the visitor occupies. A seat even upon the carpet is an honour; how much more, then, the resignation of the musnud itself!

Large lustres and chandeliers were common in the royal harem, although not generally used in the zenanahs in India. They were introduced by Nussir-u-deen. His father, Ghazi-u-deen, although fond enough of accumulating such articles of luxury reserved them all for his own reception-rooms, or for the Emanbarra.

Each of the king's wives had, of course, her own harem, her own musnud, her own reception-rooms and halls. She might not see her husband once in a month,—perhaps not anything like so often; yet was she still a wife and queen. Perfectly aware though they were, one and all, of course, of the relation in which their female attendants too often stood to his majesty, yet I have been assured that this seldom troubled them. The slave might be the favoured mistress, and the queen the neglected wife; but still each maintained her own station and position within the harem; nor would

the king himself have sanctioned any interference with their customary relations.

We had the fullest opportunities of seeing the dresses of the superior order of court-ladies ; not on those only who attended his majesty at dinner, and who were always splendidly dressed, being generally young women of great personal attractions. We *could* see them, and *did* see them, of course ; but, by a happy royal fiction, as good as most legal fictions, they were supposed to be *purdah-ladies* still ; and to have fixed our eyes upon them would have been considered rude and disrespectful. Not only had we an opportunity of seeing the native female dress of the superior orders on them, I say, but it was a common joke with his majesty, on coming from the bath, to exchange dresses with his favourite wife or mistress for the time being, and to appear before us in that attire ; nay, he has done so in the evening, behind the gauze curtain which stretched across the end of the dining-hall, and issued thence dressed as a Begum or queen.

The materials of the dress might vary much, and the method of wearing it slightly ; but the articles were always the same, and the form appeared to be stereotyped. The *pyjamas*, or wide trousers, of satin, or cloth-of-gold, or washing-silk, fell loosely over the instep, where they were sometimes gathered and tied, and sometimes extended like a train behind, gathered in front. They were confined

by a broad ribbon of gold or silver tissue at the waist, the ends of which hung down before, terminating in rich tassels which reached below the knee. Jewels and pearls were common ornaments of these tassels. The pyjamas themselves were much fuller below the knee than above,—gradually, indeed, becoming less and less full, until at the waist they fitted; and were evidently intended to fit, closely to the figure.

The bodice, which covered the upper portion of the person, and was worn beneath the other garments, was usually of some thin semi-transparent cloth—gauze, or net, or fine muslin,—the more transparent in texture apparently the more fashionable. It is, in fact, the universal covering of the women in India; and great care is taken to fit it closely to the figure,—a single wrinkle or perceptible seam in it is a defect. Those worn in the royal harem were usually ornamented round the neck with gold bangles or embroidery.

Over the bodice was thrown the *courtee*, or shirt, usually of thread-net. The *courtee* fell over, but did not conceal, the rich ornaments of the waistband of the pyjamas, and was itself adorned with gold or silver ribbons, used as a trimming upon the seams and hems.

The cloak, called *deputtah*, or *chudder*—thrown over these lighter articles of under-clothing, and worn equally within and without the house—con-

sisted of gold or silver gauze tissues, and resembled in form nothing so much as a small English bed-sheet, rather long for its breadth. The fine muslins of Dacca are much valued and prized to form those cloaks; and no trouble or expense is spared in embroidering them, and ornamenting them with rich bullion fringes. Thrown over the back part of the head, and falling gracefully on the shoulders, the deputtah, by its arrangement, may be made to give dignity and elegance to a figure in itself wanting in both; whilst, on the naturally dignified and elegant, its folds enhance, to an extraordinary degree, the grace of the wearer. Standing, it was crossed in front, one end of it falling down over the figure, which it partially screened, whilst the other was thrown over the opposite shoulder; but when the wearer was seated, the deputtah was collected in large folds round the lower part of the figure and upon the lap,—sometimes, indeed, being thrown altogether off the shoulders. This latter, however, was regarded by elderly ladies as arrant coquetry, and as being hardly proper.

Fancy a graceful young woman so clothed, of a brunette tint, with pointed shoes upon her naked feet, the soles and nails of which, as well as the palms and nails of her hands, are stained of a rose colour. The large languishing black eyes are made still more captivating by the pencilled line of black drawn on the edges of the eyelids. The eye-

brow has been carefully nurtured and tended, that no stray hair break the regularity of its semi-circular sweep. The smooth high forehead and oval countenance are thrown forward prominently by the jet-black glossy hair—smelling of the sweet jessamine oil—which has been taken off the face, and hangs in twisted folds down the back. The ears are ornamented round their edges with a variety of rings, and a large ring hangs from the cartilage of the nose—a large ring bearing a ruby between two pearls. Fancy such a figure standing before you, in all the elegant gracefulness of unrestrained and unconstrained developments,—the upper portion of the form half-hidden, half-revealed by its gauze-like coverings, the lower concealed by the brilliant-coloured pyjamas,—and you have the picture of a fine lady of the court of Oude—the reigning favourite, it may be.

It was not often that the Begums of the court went through Lucknow in formal procession. If a holy place was to be visited, however, or some act of devotion to be performed at a distant mosque, in the hope of obtaining the greatest of all blessings in their eyes, a male child, the pomp and circumstance with which the lady moved abroad were imposing enough. Before the Padshah Begum alone could the kettle-drums, as I have before remarked, be carried. She had the privilege too of the embroidered umbrella, the sun-symbol or *aftadah*,

and the peacock's feather fans. In other respects, however, the procession was much the same with all.

Let us take a glance at the Padshah Begum and her retinue, as she repairs to the holy Durgah to pray there. A portion of the king's body-guard, in their glittering livery of blue and silver, comes first—their band playing and their colours unfurled. Then two battalions of infantry draw near, also with their bands and colours. A company of spearmen, with long silvered spears, succeeds, their white dresses and uniforms contrasting pleasantly with the crimson-jacketed foot-soldiers. A party of men, also with white dresses, comes next in order, each bearing a small triangular crimson flag with the royal arms emblazoned. The covered conveyance in which the lady herself is borne follows the flags ; it is, in fact, a small room, silvered on the outside, and borne along by poles, supported by twenty bearers. Every quarter of a mile these bearers are changed. They are dressed in white cloth, fitting close to the person, with loose scarlet overcoats, edged with gold embroidery. Their turbans are also crimson, with a gilt fish in front, from which a gold tassel depends that rests upon the shoulder. The women bearers come next in the order of the procession. Their duty is to relieve the men when the conveyance reaches the palace or the exterior of the Durgah. Gold and silver sticks in waiting follow them in

great numbers, loudly vociferating the name and titles of the lady within, and whose duty it is also to keep the beggars at a distance ;—for the beggars of Lucknow are an importunate class, not easily daunted by the most resolute refusal ; besides, during such a journey, it is customary to scatter coin amongst them, and they congregate in immense numbers to receive it.

Behind the gold and silver sticks rides the chief of the eunuchs upon his elephant,—an officer of considerable authority and importance, as I have already stated. On such occasions he was usually expensively dressed in a suit of gold cloth, a suitable turban, and rich Cashmere shawls,—altogether an imposing-looking puppet.

A host of covered conveyances, of all kinds, follow the eunuch, containing the ladies of the Padshah Begum's court. Palanquins, chundoles, and ruts, are the most numerous of this crowd of oddly-shaped vehicles : the palanquins, every one knows now-a-days, are simply large boxes, with sliding doors at the sides, in which the lady reclines ; the chundole is of higher quality, loftier and more expensive ; whilst the rut is simply a small waggon, drawn by two bullocks. Soldiers, spearmen, and gold and silver sticks in waiting, accompany this crowd of conveyances in great numbers—the whole number of ladies so borne not being less than from a hundred and fifty to two hundred. You ask, what do they all do ? The

answer is, they do all sorts of things. Some of them are professed storytellers, in more senses than one. They lull their mistresses to sleep with tales after the manner of the *Arabian Nights*. Others shampoo well, and are so employed for hours every day. Others sew ; for although men generally make the women's clothes in India, yet in the harem they keep female sempstresses. Others read the Koran—the blue-stockings of the palace. Others, again, are a kind of superior slaves, doing the domestic work of the harem ; but yet not to be exposed to the gaze of man, however menially employed.

So attended, with such crowds of followers and noise-makers, of both sexes and none, goes the Padshah Begum along on her way to the house of prayer ; she, you may depend upon it, thinking no little of her own greatness, and of the noise her greatness makes in the world. Let her fade away from our mental vision then, if not with peace, at least with kindly wishes ; for she is, after all, to be pitied, rich gilded slave. The poorest shopkeeper's wife in England, that has an honest husband and a home of her own, is more to be respected, and is a happier woman, than the Padshah Begum of Oude, with all her glitter.

CHAPTER X.

DUELLO—PARTRIDGES TO TIGERS.

Partridges and quails trained for fighting—After-dinner sports—Antelopes—The encounter—Its usual termination—Tigers—*Kagra* and the *Terai-wallah*—The court in the balcony—The struggle beneath—The death-grapple—The victory.

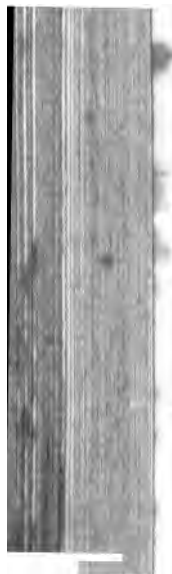
ONE of the most common amusements of the court of Oude was the fighting of birds and wild animals, trained for the most part for that purpose. Cock-partridges, skilfully spurred, would peck and wrestle with a pertinacity strange to see, and which much delighted his majesty. On such occasions, usually after dinner, the table was cleared, and the combatants, duly prepared by stimulating drugs, were ushered into "the presence." The king, seated as usual in his gilt arm-chair in the centre of one side of the table, would give the order to the attending servants, and the sport would begin. The two cocks, placed upon the table, would survey us all leisurely in succession, wondering, doubtless, what they were there for. A crow or two, shrill and yet sonorous, would be uttered and answered; but no sign of hostility. At length a hen would be placed on the table between them, exactly opposite his majesty. With leisurely step they would advance from either

side to make acquaintance with the new-comer, in a solemn dignified way, just like a Turk entering a mosque or a harem.

As they each saw the other likewise advancing, evidences of hostility would appear in their gait and attitude. A feather started here, a neck protruded there, a defiant crow, answered by a more defiant chuckle,—the hen remaining a patient spectator of the scene,—until a final rush was made. She, flying off as quietly as possible, leaves the two lords of partridge creation to settle the dispute between them; and they, with standing feathers, and erect combs and protruded beak, are in a moment hard at work. Nothing can be more scientific than the sparring which follows; each watching his adversary intently, with stretched-out neck, as the half-expanded wings twitch with rage or excitement, and the spurred legs are hastily raised and depressed in succession, as if eager for the fray; each moving cautiously round, making feigned assaults and as feigned retreats; each red with eager desire of glory, and anxious to dip his beak in the blood of his foe. All around, human faces, gazing intently, watch the combat, and applaud now one, now the other warrior, as the battle proceeds; the king the most excited of all.

At length, with a simultaneous bound, the two little heroes meet each other in the air a few inches above the table; the spurs are plunged into the thighs or sides of the enemy, and the bills make





savage dashes at his eyes. Blood flows, a few tiny specks here and there ; but still sufficient to show that it has been no sham assault, no harmless passage of arms without aim or purpose. The gazers salute the conqueror of the moment as he stands on the battle-field elate, and proclaims his own prowess with a triumphant chuckle. But there is no time to be lost. The foe is advancing again. He is not a whit intimidated by the drops of blood he has lost, his torn thigh, or his ripped-up side. No, he will to the work again, with right good-will and in fearless earnest.

Another jump, and again the spurs are struck, and again the beaks snap at the eyes madly. The victor of a moment before has lost his advantage, and retires a few paces, with one eye torn from its socket and dangling by a tendon on his cheek. It is cruel sport truly ; but we round the table are too much accustomed to it to think much of that, and again the room rings with shouts of laughter and uproarious encouragement to the poor little warrior that has lost his eye. He wants no encouragement; however. In a moment the fight has been renewed, if possible with more savage fierceness than ever ; and not till one of the combatants drops dead upon the table, or dying from loss of blood, is it concluded,—the victor often without an eye, and left a cripple for life ; fortunate indeed if he retain the use of one leg. So that the conqueror is often carried

off by the admiring servants, to be petted for his prowess, and to die.

The wine circulates again at the table, which has been wiped clean; the king is in great vein, and insists upon every one taking snuff with him, which all pretend to do.* The female attendants blow up the fire in his hookah, which is placed on the floor behind him, and he puffs and puffs again in joyous exhilaration, laughing all the while at the clever little devil that picked out his adversary's eye so neatly, and then got ripped up in return. It was very laughable!

"But we must have some more," exclaims hilarious majesty; and the attendants hasten to inquire whether the anointed of the Company will have quails now, or partridges again, or crows, or common cocks. He makes his choice, and the sport proceeds anew, ever becoming more noisy and uproarious as the wine circulates the more; until his majesty can give no more coherent orders, and the revel is at an end.

A beautiful description of antelope, small and delicately formed, is caught at the base of the Himalayas in great numbers, and is trained at Lucknow to fight. These fights, however, usually took place in one of the palace-gardens, or in an

* It is highly indecorous to sneeze in "the presence:" a native, as I have before remarked, is liable to lose his nose for so doing.

enclosure prepared for the purpose ; the king being seated in a balcony or gallery to witness the contest, and his courtiers around and about him. Nothing could be more graceful than the half-trotting gait at which the two horned heroes approached each other, their branching antlers dancing in the air as they did so ; and then, to see the skilful manœuvring of the pair to gain some little advantage of position or station previous to coming to close quarters ! It was beautiful to see, and pitiful that all this grace and elegance should be displayed in such a cause.

Crossing their antlers, and sparring with them vigorously, the two warriors now advanced, now retreated, as they gained or lost some little advantage. At length, after much twining and intertwining, after much manœuvring and cautious setting to each other, the antlers were locked finally together ; and then came the eager straining of every muscle and every tendon, the anxious trial of strength, which often ended in the death of one or the other. With hind-quarters well braced up for a vigorous shove, head lowered, and feet firmly fixed against the ground, would the two combatants push and resist, and push again, pertinaciously.

One gained a little advantage at one moment, and drove his adversary a few paces back, only to lose it at another, and to be driven back in his turn. And yet, *with every muscle strung to its utmost tension, with every vein swelling in the eager desire for*

victory, not a leg was raised that was not gracefully set down again, not a movement that did not indicate elegant proportion, harmonious adaptation of part to part, and of limb to limb.

At length the strength of one of the combatants has yielded under the long-continued exertion ; the rolling eyes begin to indicate terror in their fiery distension ; the legs are raised and depressed with nervous twitching, as the weaker party is gradually forced back, without a hope of regaining the advantage lost. The stronger pushes his adversary all the more fiercely at these symptoms of failing vigour. The hope that has been oozing from the breast of the weaker, inspires the stronger, and makes him all the more determined.

Great is the excitement in the gallery containing the king and his courtiers as this crisis of the struggle is attained. Great the straining of eyes and the stretching of necks to watch the *finale*—the king again the most excited and eager of all.

“ He is yielding fast ; he is yielding fast ! ” shouts his majesty ; “ the dark one has the advantage.”

There could not be a doubt of the fact. Ever onwards and onwards pushes the dark antelope, the head still more depressed than before, every muscle starting, every limb dancing with animation ; whilst, on the other side, his yielding adversary rolls his eyes about more wildly than ever. He is becoming paralysed with terror. His graceful limbs twitch with

fear and uncontrollable emotion as he still yields ground. At length he has reached the limit of the enclosure ; his hind-quarters are fixed against the bamboo railing. He can go back no further ; and still the remorseless enemy pushes on ever more fiercely.

" Now for the sport," exclaims an eager spectator in the gallery, rubbing his hands as he sees the disheartened antelope pinned between the bamboo railing on one side, and the pushing antagonist on the other. " Now for the sport,"—and king and courtiers chuckle over the display.

The weaker animal, as he still maintains the unequal contest, trembling as he is, hears the exclamation, and rolls his eyes as well as he can helplessly upwards : he does not know but help may come, somehow, from that quarter. The strength which has borne him up hitherto now begins to fail ; the quivering limbs totter as the antagonist, lowering his head still more, pushes with renewed vigour ; the muscles are suddenly relaxed, and he turns sideways from his opponent, as if to escape by flight. In a moment the antlers are unlocked, and the sharp points of those borne by the victor are plunged into the flanks of the vanquished. The head of the poor animal thus gored is tossed wildly up ; and he groans with pain as he sinks on one knee, big tears coursing each other down his cheeks.

But life is sweet ; and with a vigorous effort he

tears himself away from his dangerous position, wrenching the head of the victor to the side as he does so. Like an arrow he is off, winging his way with the speed of the wind round the enclosure, looking for some means of escape.

The excitement in the gallery is still greater than it was ; there is to be more sport, and the king encourages the fugitive with a hearty "*shavash!*" (bravo !)

An antelope flying for life runs swiftly—the eye feels a difficulty in following him distinctly. The fugitive looks eagerly for some means of escape ; but there is none : and as he courses round, with almost incredible speed, his flanks bearing bloody tokens of his defeat, his adversary collects himself for a new plunge. The head is again depressed almost until the mouth touches the knees ; the antlers, tipped with blood, are directed in an oblique line against the side of the fleeing foe ; and, watching his opportunity, he rushes forcibly against the fugitive. He has "pinned" his antagonist again, skilful warrior that he is ; the antlers are thrust far into the steaming side—the foe falls dying, or dead perhaps ; and the victor, shaking off the carcass from his horns, raises his head and triumphs.

But why talk of the struggles of insignificant antelopes, graceful though they be, when there is the contest of the more savage tiger, the unwieldy rhinoceros, or the gigantic elephant to describe ? The

partridges, the quails, the crows, the cocks, the trained rams and antelopes, are but the child's play of these exhibitions; two tigers tearing each other, two rhinoceroses ripping each other up with their knife-like horns, two elephants in a death-struggle, are the serious acts of these tragic comedies, or comic tragedies, or simple tragedies, if the benevolent reader will have it so,—the others being merely the unimportant by-play, the lighter and the more trifling incidents.

When the two tigers, properly prepared for the contest by being kept without food and water for some days previously, were introduced into the strongly-railed and barricaded enclosure, a pin dropping in the court-yard might almost have been heard. Expectation stood on tiptoe to know what would be the result.

There was a famous tiger—a monster of a tiger—named *Kagra*, who had triumphed at Lucknow on several occasions. He was certainly one of the largest I have ever seen; and beautifully streaked was his glossy coat, as it moved freely over his muscular limbs and long back. The connoisseurs in sport had despaired of finding a fitting adversary for *Kagra*, when news arrived that a tiger of enormous size and strength had been taken uninjured in the Terai—the long strip of jungle-land between Oude and Nepaul, just at the foot of the Himalayas. It was anticipated that there would be glorious sport

when this new monster was brought face to face with the redoubted Kagra.

The stranger—the *Terai-wallah* as he was called—was taken especial care of; and it was on the occasion of the visit of the commander-in-chief of the Anglo-Indian army to the King of Oude that the contest was to take place. More than ordinary pains were taken to render the spectacle imposing. The court-yard in which the battle was to be fought was richly decorated with leaves and flowers, with all that brilliancy of colouring and taste in its distribution for which the natives of India are so deservedly famous. The gallery to receive the king and his court, the commander-in-chief and his staff, was elaborately ornamented with gilding and flags. The royal canopy—umbrella-shaped—of crimson and gold tissue, was raised above the state-chair; whilst similar seats of honour were prepared on either hand for the commander-in-chief and the resident. The king wore his crown on the occasion; it was a new one, only lately made, with an elaborate display of jewellery, and a beautiful heron's plume of snowy whiteness bending gracefully over it. He could act with dignity when he liked; and the contrast between the rich, though softened, umber colour of his countenance, and the glittering jewels, and the delicate plume, was very imposing and pleasing to look upon. He wore on this occasion his Oriental dress, formed of the glittering kincobs of China—

silk of gold-like and silver-like appearance, glancing with every movement like burnished jewellery. The commander-in-chief wore his general's uniform ; the resident was dressed in plain clothes. It was a spectacle not easily forgotten. Such a scene will live robustly in the memory when a thousand more important events have faded into forgetfulness.

The cages of Kagra and Terai-wallah were brought to opposite sides of the court-yard, both commanded by our position in the gallery. We could see the long shining backs of the tigers as they roamed round their cages in great excitement ; occasionally there was a snarl and a display of teeth alarming to witness, as some attendant approached the cages.

It was intended that the animals should become aware of the presence of each other, and hence the previous delay ; for, ferocious as the tiger is, he is naturally a cowardly animal, and, if brought unexpectedly into the presence of danger, may cower and retreat from the contest.

I have seen two of them, properly prepared, that is, both hungry and thirsty, when bounding into the enclosure, and ignorant that another tiger was in the vicinity, do their utmost to get back into their cages ; and, failing that, slink away to a corner, crouch down there upon their bellies, and watch each other intently, indisposed to hostility.

It was evident that Kagra and the Terai-wallah were soon aware of each other's vicinity ; for as they

prowled round, they would stand and growl and show their teeth at the opposite cage in an eminently tiger-like manner. The commander-in-chief and the resident had inspected both of them previously.

"On which of them will your excellency bet?" asked the king, as he saw the commander-in-chief watching them intently.

"Your majesty will perhaps pardon me," said the general. The Company were wroth with the king, because his territory was in so much confusion and disorder, so the commander-in-chief would *not* bet with him.

"A hundred gold mohurs on Kagra," said the king, turning to the resident.

"Done, your majesty; I think the Terai-wallah is the more likely to succeed," was the resident's answer.

The king rubbed his hands with glee. He was beginning to enjoy the situation.

"Will you bet on the Terai-wallah?" he asked his prime-minister eagerly in Hindustani.

"My lord the resident is always right; I will, sire," was the prime-minister's reply—prime-minister in name only; it must be remembered, but a man of great wealth; the European barber then standing among the king's suite was the real prime-minister.

"A hundred gold mohurs, then, on Kagra," said his majesty.

The prime-minister accepted the bet, and took out a very elegant little tablet from his belted Cashmere shawl to make a note of the transaction. Not that he intended to remind his majesty of it, had his majesty chosen to forget ; but in case majesty should say he had bet on Kagra, he would be able to show the entry made at the time, and express timidly a doubt whether "the refuge of the world" might not have been correct and he wrong. Aye, and he would pay his hundred gold mohurs, too, if "the refuge of the world" insisted that he *had* bet on the Terai-wallah ; pay it smilingly, and then repay himself by squeezing a little harder than usual—only a *little*—the next rich delinquent that passed through his hands.

The signal was given—the bamboo railing in front of the cages rose simultaneously on either side—the doors of the cages opened. Terai-wallah sprang with a single bound out of his cage, opening his huge jaws widely, and shaking from side to side his long tail in an excited way. Kagra advanced more leisurely into the arena, but with similar demonstrations. They might have been fifty feet apart, as they stood surveying each other, open-mouthed, the tails playing all the time.

At length Kagra advanced a few paces ; his adversary laid himself down forthwith upon the court-yard, just where he stood, facing him, but with his feet well under him not extended, evidently

quite prepared for a spring. Kagra watched his foe intently, and still advanced slowly and cautiously, but not in a straight line, rather towards the side, describing an arc of a circle as he drew near.

The Terai-wallah soon rose to his feet and likewise advanced, describing a similar arc on the opposite side, both gradually approaching each other, however. It was a moment of breathless suspense in the gallery. Every eye was fixed on the two combatants as they thus tried to circumvent each other; it was enough to arrest the attention, for the tigers were unusually large; both were in beautiful condition, plump and muscular; the colour of the Terai-wallah was somewhat lighter than that of Kagra, a more yellowish hue shone between the black stripes. Both were very beautiful, and very courageous, and very formidable.

At length, as they thus advanced, step by step, very slowly, Kagra made a spring. His former victories had probably made him a little self-confident. He sprang, not as if it were a voluntary effort of his own, but as if he were suddenly impelled aloft by some uncontrollable galvanic force which he could not resist. The spring was so sudden, so rapid, so impetuous, that it had quite the appearance of being involuntary. The Terai-wallah was not unprepared. As rapidly as Kagra had hurled himself up into the air, so rapidly did his adversary jump aside; both movements seemed to be simultaneous, so admirably were

they executed. Kagra alighted, foiled ; but before he could recover himself, before he could have well assured himself that he *was* foiled, the Terai-wallah was upon him. The claws of his adversary were fixed firmly in his neck, and the horrid jaws were already grating near his throat. It was the work of a moment. We could scarcely see that the Terai-wallah had gained the advantage—we could scarcely distinguish his huge fore-paws grasping the neck, and his open mouth plunged at the throat—when Kagra made another spring, a bound in which he evidently concentrated all his energy. The Terai-wallah was dragged with him for a little ; the claws that had been dug into his neck were torn gratingly through it ; the open mouth snapped fiercely but harmlessly at the advancing shoulder, and Kagra was free. His neck and shoulder, however, bore bloody traces of the injury he had received ; and no sooner did he feel that he had got rid of his assailant than he turned with greater fierceness than ever to assail his foe.

“ Shavash ! Kagra—bravo ! I’ll make it two hundred gold mohurs,” said the king, turning to his prime-minister.

“ The asylum of the world commands it—two hundred let it be,” replied Rooshun, as he took out his tablets anew.

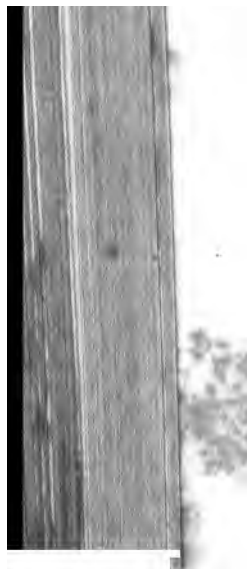
But the interest of the contest in the arena was too intense to admit of our attention being withdrawn

from it. It was but for an instant that the two tigers stood surveying each other, open-mouthed, after Kagra had shaken off the grip of his antagonist. With distended jaws, the ample mouths opened to their utmost limit, their beautifully-streaked skins starting from their forms in excitement, their eyes distended as they watched each other, the ends of the tails moving once or twice, as if with convulsive twitches, they stood. Kagra was the first to attack again. This time his opponent was too near to try his former stratagem of slipping to one side: he met him boldly. They stood at that moment near the centre of the arena; and, as the sharp claws moved incessantly, and the huge mouths tried to grasp the neck on either side, it was impossible to distinguish the attack from the defence; all was so rapid.

Drawing gradually nearer as they thus fought with claws and mouths ferociously, uttering fierce snarls as they did so, each seemed to have succeeded in gripping his antagonist. With their mouths buried in each other's throats, and their claws dug deeply into the neck, they rose at length to the contest on their hind legs—straining and tugging, and wrestling, as it were, with each other, both with their utmost force and skill. It was a spectacle of startling interest, that; and however you may turn away, good madam, and exclaim horrible! or savage! believe me there were many elements of the sublime



THE COMBAT OF THE TWO GREAT TIGERS.



in that contest ; and doubtless such contests often take place in the jungle.

They stood more than six feet high as they thus grappled with each other, elevated on their hind legs, in a sort of death-struggle ; their round heads and glaring eyes surmounting the muscular pillars of their long bodies beautifully. It was wonderful to see how firmly the claws were fixed into the neck on both sides. There was no shifting of position, no further grasping either with claw or mouth. It was now a contest of life or death. Both were bleeding freely, and it would chiefly depend upon strength as to which should be thrown under the other, and thereby probably lose his hold.

These things take long to describe, but they occurred very rapidly. There was deep silence in the arena and in the gallery, as the two wild beasts thus stood confronting each other on their hind legs—deep silence and earnest gazing on all sides and from all quarters ; even the very breathing was suspended in many as they watched the contest. Not for long, however, as I have said. Kagra, more skilful or more impetuous than his antagonist, overthrew him at length, and the two rolled over on the arena ; the Terai-wallah on his back beneath, Kagra above.

“ Shavash, Kagra ! ” uttered the king again, well pleased. “ Kagra has the advantage,” *uttered more than one voice in English.*

But the advantage was only momentary. The hind claws of Kagra were being plunged into the belly of his foe, when the Terai-wallah, who never let go his hold for a moment with his mouth, struck one of his fore-paws over the face of his antagonist. His claws evidently pierced Kagra's eyes; one of them was torn from its socket; and uttering a howl of pain or despair, the mutilated beast relinquished his grip, and would have torn himself from his antagonist.

This, however, he was not permitted to do. The Terai-wallah clung pertinaciously to his adversary's throat: his teeth were deeply infixed. He was dragged for a few paces over the arena by Kagra, who tried to release himself in vain; and then, all at once leaping from his prostrate position, the Terai-wallah hurled himself on the top of his assailant.

The contest was virtually at an end. Kagra, now fallen beneath his foe, and fast losing blood, was incapable of regaining the advantage he had lost. The Terai-wallah, thrusting one paw under his lower jaw, forced back the head further until he infixed his teeth still more deeply into the throat. Kagra did battle ineffectually with his claws, tearing the skin of his antagonist here and there; but he had lost the hold he had obtained with his mouth, and was evidently fast sinking under the victor's grasp and bite.

“ Kagra is beaten ! ” was uttered in Hindustani and English in the gallery above.

“ He is,” said the king, as he gave orders to the servants below to open Kagra’s cage, and drive off the Terai-wallah.

Red-hot rods were thrust through the bars of the enclosure, and the successful tiger was cruelly burnt before he would relinquish his hold. It was the most barbarous part of the exhibition ; and yet it was the only way to save the life of Kagra. At length the Terai-wallah was driven off, his jaws dropping blood as he went. Kagra’s cage was opened, and he made for it immediately, with all the marks of the conquered about him ; he left his track on the arena in blood-stains, whilst his tail hung flaccidly between his legs ; yet, though he was flying, he fled stealthily, as it were, not vigorously and upright as a horse would have fled, but with stealthy, creeping, cat-like agility. The red-hot rods were held before the Terai-wallah to prevent him from pursuing. He still faced towards, and glared after, his beaten foe ; and ere Kagra had reached his cage, he sprang high above the rods to attack the flying tiger once more. He fell short of his victim, however. Kagra quickened his steps, reached the cage, and buried himself in its further corner, cowering like a whipped cur.

As for the Terai-wallah, he watched his defeated antagonist steadily to the last, never once taking his

eyes off him ; and then, shaking himself two or three times, he licked his paws, rose majestically from his crouching posture, and walked deliberately towards his own cage, which was open to receive him ; his torn shoulders, and the large drops of blood which fell from him as he walked, proclaiming how dearly he had won his victory.

CHAPTER XI.

DUELLO—THE RHINOCEROS AND ELEPHANT.

Fighting camels—The rhinoceros—His peaceful nature—His manner of fighting—The rhinoceros and the elephant—The rhinoceros and the tiger—The fighting elephants—*Malleer*—The struggle—Fall of the mahout—His death—The elephant's remorse—Another fight—Danger and escape.

I HAVE already described the ordinary fights of birds, antelopes, and tigers: I now turn to the larger and more unwieldy animals. Nothing more brutal than the contests of camels can well be conceived. They are trained to fighting with each other in Lucknow; but nature intended them to be useful, peaceful animals, not warlike; and when man, endeavouring to change their nature, insists upon their being warlike for his gratification, the sight is odious. It is well known that, like the lama of Peru, the camel discharges a fluid from its throat at its adversary. I have seen those trained to fight bring up one of their stomachs in the energy of their spitting! A horrible sight! Nor was it more pleasant to see one grasp the long lip of the other between his teeth, and drag it off in a brutal way. Such fights end only in lacerating the head and injuring the eyes, the huge bodies remaining untouched.

Naturally, the rhinoceros is also a peaceful animal

Bishop Heber says, that in Ghazi-u-deen's reign the rhinoceros was used in a carriage, and to carry a howdah. I have never seen him so employed. Although peaceful, however, he is better fitted by nature for warfare than the poor camel. His knife-like horn, his skin more impenetrable than a coat of mail, his compact body and huge muscular limbs, all render him a fearful antagonist to the largest animals. When roused, he will soon make away, I doubt not, with a hippopotamus, and is a match for an elephant.

The extent to which these various animals were kept at Lucknow for purposes of "sport" may be conceived, from the fact of the royal menagerie having contained, when I served the king of Oude, from fifteen to twenty rhinoceroses. They were kept in the open park around Chaun-gunge, and were allowed to roam about, at large, within certain limits.

It was usually at this palace, Chaun-gunge, and sometimes at another on the banks of the river called Mobarrack Munzul, that the fights of the larger animals took place, generally in an enclosure made for the purpose, over one side of which a balcony had been built for the king and his attendants, not unlike a portico in front of a house to receive carriages—structures far more common in Calcutta than in London. Sometimes, however, the fights took place in the open park, where galleries had

been erected on substantial pillars. The two rhinoceroses, males,—always more ready to engage in combat at particular seasons than at other times, just as the elephants are,—were duly prepared by stimulating drugs, and let into the enclosure from opposite sides, or were driven in the park towards each other by active fellows on horseback with long spears. The first sight of the antagonist was generally enough to cause each to be ready to attack ; for they know at once, by their keen sense of smell, whether a male or female is in their vicinity. Rushing against each other, with heads somewhat lowered, they met angrily in the midst, thrusting forward their armed snouts in a hog-like way.

So thick are their hides on the back and legs, that even the short knife-like horn of the snout can make no impression upon it. In the more tender skin of the belly alone, or between the legs can injury be done. The object of each, then, in closing, is to introduce his snout between the fore-legs of his antagonist, and so rip him up ; a process which the slight curve of the horn backwards renders comparatively an easy one, if the required position be attained.

But as both equally seek the same advantage, their heads and snouts in the first instance meet in the midst. They strike each other, they push, they lower *their heads*, they grunt valorously, displaying *an amount of activity and energy that one would*

conceive it almost impossible for them to exercise with their unwieldy forms. The snouts rattle against each other as they mutually strike; the horns may come into contact too, and the sound which is produced plainly tells that it is with no child's play that they are thus crossed. At length, in some way or other, they appear to be locked together, horn to horn, snout to snout, head to head—the heads always down defending the chest and the entrance between the fore-legs. Then commences a hard struggle,—a firm continuous pushing with all their might. Each throws the whole weight of his huge form into the scale, and with that the enormous strength with which nature has endowed him. They push, and push, and push again with obstinate perseverance. The weaker must ultimately lose ground. He is driven back, at first slowly, step by step, then more rapidly, in a sort of backward trot; the stronger and sturdier pursuing his advantage with implacable ferocity. At length the weaker, finding that he can no longer make head, makes a desperate plunge backwards to release his snout and horns. It is the decisive moment of the combat. I have seen it end very variously. If in an enclosure, and the weaker has no room to withdraw himself, he is almost sure to be ripped up by the impetuous assailant, and to fall very severely wounded or dead; his adversary being driven off by hot irons thrust under him, and spears. In the

open park, however, the weaker, if active, sometimes succeeded in detaching himself, and scampering off as fast as possible without receiving any severe hurt. The stronger pursued with hearty good will, and they were soon out of sight. In such cases, all would depend upon the nature of the ground, and the relative activity of the two. If the flying combatant were overtaken by his pursuer, nothing could save his life, for a gaping wound, a foot deep, would soon be made in his chest. On one occasion, however, and on only one, I saw a very different termination of the contest to that which was expected.

The weaker had been gradually retreating, at first slowly, afterwards more rapidly. It was in the open park. At length he made a plunge backwards to release himself, and succeeded. The stronger brute, evidently somewhat pig-headed, surprised at the action, thrust his snout upwards in an astonished way; his more active enemy saw the movement at once, and, though evidently preparing to fly, checked himself, lowered his head, and had his snout introduced between his enemy's fore-legs in an instant. The stream of blood which flowed from the wounded combatant, and his quick snort of pain, proclaimed the victory of him who, up to this moment, had been losing ground, and hope perhaps. The wounded rhinoceros now turned to fly, losing blood rapidly, and his intestines partially protruding from the wound. His adversary allowed him to turn and run

a few paces ; and then burying his snout again between his hind legs, gored him severely. He fell in a frightfully mangled way, and the active horse-men with their long spears drove off the assailant—no easy matter. Whether the wounded rhinoceros died or not, I do not know. I probably heard at the time and have forgotten. So skilful are the native leeches, however, in attending these monsters, that I should not at all wonder if he recovered.

The contest between a rhinoceros and an elephant is not nearly so interesting as that between the rhinoceros and the tiger. In the former case it is not easy, in the first place, to make the two animals attack each other, even though the elephant be *must,** and the rhinoceros in a similar condition. Should they take a fancy, however, to try each other's mettle, the elephant approaches as usual, with his trunk thrown up into the air and head protruded ; the rhinoceros either standing upon his guard, or also advancing with lowered snout. The tusks of the elephant sometimes pass on each side of the rhinoceros harmlessly, whilst the huge head shoves the lighter animal backwards. If the elephant's tusks trip up the rhinoceros, as is sometimes the case, they are then plunged into him without mercy ; but more frequently the contest ends to the disadvantage of the elephant, by the

* See page 101, foot-note.

rhinoceros inserting his snout between his antagonist's fore-legs and partially ripping him up ; the elephant belabouring all the time with his trunk, to a certain extent uselessly, however. Prevented by his tusks, the rhinoceros cannot get his snout far under the elephant's body, so that the wound he inflicts is not generally a very severe one.

Between the rhinoceros and the tiger, however, the contest is one of infinitely more animation and excitement. The steady impassive guard of the larger animal ; the stealthy, cat-like attack of the smaller—the lowered snout of the one ; the gleaming teeth of the other—the cocked horn, kept valorously in an attitude of defiant guard ; the bullet head, with its gleaming eyes, together with the brawny claws—were all things to be watched and to interest. The rhinoceros, however, is secure from attack on his back, and when the tiger springs, his claws get no hold in the plate-like covering of his antagonist. Should the rhinoceros be overthrown by the tiger's weight, then the fate of the former is sealed ; he is ripped and torn up and gnawed from beneath, as a tiger only can rip, and tear up, and gnaw ; I have heard of such results following the tiger's assault, but have never witnessed such.

In nine cases out of ten, the rhinoceros gains the advantage ; the tiger springs, and springs, and springs *again, still baffled* by the voluminous armour-like

skin of his antagonist, until, at some moment or other, the rhinoceros seizes his opportunity, and succeeds in inflicting a severe wound with his formidable horn. The tiger then declines the combat, and easily escapes its unwieldy enemy, should the rhinoceros take it into his head to attack.

There is no other animal, perhaps, so utterly impervious to attack as the rhinoceros; there is certainly none other that takes all attacks with such perfect coolness and self-possession. Shut up in a comparatively small enclosure with a ferocious tiger, he seems to be not in the least disconcerted—not even to find his situation uncomfortable—but, with wonderful phlegmatic ease, stands prepared for all contingencies. His coat of armour is, of course, his chief defence; but the shape of his head contributes much to his safety. It curves inwards from the snout to the forehead; so that the eyes are deeply sunk and securely wedged into a concave bone where they cannot be easily assailed—the short pointed horn forming an additional defence to them, and one of the most formidable weapons of offence too, possessed by any animal, when the strength of the rhinoceros is considered. There is something surprising, notwithstanding all this, in seeing this pig-like animal withstanding or conquering the largest tigers and elephants. I have never seen the rhinoceros pitted against the lion. The king of Oude had but three or four lions, and he reserved them for

very special occasions ; but a contest between the two would but be similar, I doubt not, to that between the rhinoceros and the tiger. Indeed the lion fights so exactly like the tiger, that a contest between two lions is precisely similar to that between two tigers. There was no lion in Lucknow a match for the largest tigers there ; doubtless the few found in the north-western Himalayas, and in Asia generally, are not equal to those of Africa ; but I very much doubt whether the Bengal tiger is not the more formidable animal of the two. I have never seen any lions in London or Paris equal in size to the largest tigers at Lucknow.

Of the hundred and fifty elephants possessed by the king of Oude, there was one with one broken tusk, that had been victor in a hundred fights. His name was *Malleer* ; and he was a great favourite with the king. His tusk had been broken off bit by bit in several encounters ; the elephants rushing against each other with such force, as sometimes to snap off a portion, or the whole of a tusk. *Malleer* had lost his, as I have said, gradually. He was a formidable black fellow, very terrible when in that excited state called *must*. During the visit of the commander-in-chief it was determined that a fitting antagonist should be found for *Malleer*, and that he should once more make his appearance on the stage as a gladiator. It was fortunately the proper season. *Malleer* was *must* ; and another gigantic elephant,

also black, and of course in a similar state, was selected to be his antagonist.

When in this excited state, two male elephants have but to see each other to commence the combat forthwith; there is no incitement required. Each has its own keeper, or *mahout** as he is called, seated on his neck—the only person who can safely approach the animal at such a season. In the mahout's hands, however, even then, the monster is generally docile as a child.

There is no preparation required for the combat but the passing of a secure string from the neck of the elephant to his tail—a string by which the mahout holds on and retains his position during the combat. It may be easily supposed that the poor man's situation is by no means a comfortable one during such a contest; but so jealous is each of the good fame of his beast, that he would rather have his own selected for such sport than be excused. It is an honour paid to him as well as to the gigantic combatant whom he guides. Should he be thrown, the elephant opposed to him would certainly destroy him if he got an opportunity. He therefore clings to the string with all the tenacity of a man grasping a plank after a shipwreck.

On the occasion on which Malleer's services were required for the amusement of the British com-

* Pronounced ma-houth.

mander-in-chief, and the king and court of Oude, we were in one of the king's palaces, situated on the camps of the Goomty. A terrace built on the water-side overlooked the river. An open park was on the opposite side of the stream ; and on that bank it was resolved the contest should take place, we inspecting it from the balcony. The Goomty at this place was not wider than Fleet Street in London, and the terrace projected over the water, so that we were quite near enough to see the encounter well. The opposite bank was covered with grass ; there was nothing to impede the vision for a considerable distance.

At a signal given by the king, the two elephants advanced from opposite sides, each with his mahout on his neck ; Malleer, with his one tusk looking by no means so formidable as the huge black antagonist whom he was to fight, and who was well furnished with ivory. The moment they caught sight of each other, the two elephants, as if with an instinctive perception of what was expected of them, put their trunks and tails aloft, and shuffled up to each other with considerable speed, after their unwieldy fashion, trumpeting out loudly mutual defiance. This is the ordinary attitude of attack of the elephant. He puts his trunk up perpendicularly, in order that it may be out of harm's way. His tail is similarly raised from excitement. His trumpeting consists of a series of quick blasts, between roars and grunting.

ay, and the king of Oude, the British commander-in-chief, and the resident, are gazing intently on them from the balcony as they *so* shove ; gazing intently, so that the balcony is absolutely without noise or sound.

At length the redoubted Malleer, one-tusked though he was, began to gain the advantage. The fore leg of his antagonist was raised as if uncertainly, one could not tell whether to advance or retreat, as he still stoutly shoved with all his might. But it was evident very soon that it was not to advance, but to retreat, that the leg was *so* raised. It had hardly been set down again, when the other was similarly raised and lowered. The mahout of Malleer saw the movement, and knew well what it indicated. He shouted more frantically than ever—almost demoniacally in fact—striking the skull with his iron prong in a wild excited way. But Malleer needed no encouragement. He was too old a warrior not to feel that another victory was about being added to his laurels, and his strength seemed increased by the conviction. He and his mahout together became more and more excited every instant.

At this time they were only a few yards from the bank of the Goomty, a little to the left of our balcony. The retreating elephant gave way step by step, slowly, drawing nearer to the river as he did so. At length, with a sudden leap backwards, he tore



himself from his antagonist, and threw his unwieldy form down the bank into the river. His mahout clung to the rope over his back, and was soon seen safe and sound on his neck, whilst the elephant swam off to gain the opposite bank. Malleer was furious at this escape of his antagonist. His mahout wanted him to follow; but he would not take to the water. He glared round, wild with fury, to see what he could attack. His mahout, still urging him, with no gentle strokes and with wild shouts, to pursue, at length lost his balance in his excitement, as Malleer turned savagely about, and fell to the earth! He fell right before the infuriated beast whom he had been rendering more and more wild and ungovernable. We were not left in doubt as to his fate for a moment. We had just time to see that the man had fallen, and was lying on his back, with his limbs disordered, one leg under him and the other stretched helplessly out, whilst both arms were raised aloft, when we saw the huge foot of the elephant placed upon his chest, and heard the bones crackling, as the whole body of the man was crushed into a shapeless mass!

There was hardly time for a cry; the swaying of his form on the elephant's neck—his fall—the sound caused by his striking the elastic turf—the foot placed upon him, and the horrid crushing which followed—all was the work of an instant or two. But *this did not sate* the enraged animal. Still keeping

his foot on the man's chest, he seized one arm with his trunk and tore it from the body. In another moment it was hurling high up in the air, the blood spirting from it as it whirled. It was a horrible sight. The other arm was then seized, and was similarly dealt with.

We were all horrified, of course, at the untoward result of our sport, for which nobody was to blame but the huge beast ; when our alarm and horror were increased at seeing a woman rushing from the side whence Malleer had made his appearance, rushing directly towards the elephant. She had an infant in her arms, and she ran as fast as her burden would permit. The commander-in-chief stood up in the balcony, exclaiming :—

“ Here will be more butchery, your majesty. Can nothing be done to prevent it ? ”

“ It is the mahout's wife, I have no doubt,” replied the king ; “ what can be done ? ”

But the resident had already given the order for the horsemen with their long spears to advance and lead off the elephant ; given the order, it is true, but the execution of those orders was not an affair of a moment. Time was lost in communicating them—the men had to mount—they must advance cautiously, five on each side. By means of their long spears, they conduct the *must* elephants about, directing the spears against the trunk, which is tender, if the animal be wayward. They are, of course, expect

horsemen ; and must be prepared to gallop off at a moment's notice, should the animal slip past the spear and advance to attack.

Whilst the spearmen were thus preparing to lead off the elephant, that is, mounting, and then advancing cautiously from either side, the poor woman, reckless of consequences, was running towards the elephant.

" O Malleer, Malleer ! cruel, savage beast ! see what you have done," she cried ; " here finish our house at once. You have taken off the roof, now break down the walls ; you have killed my husband, whom you loved so well, now kill me and his son."

To those unaccustomed to India, this language may appear unnatural or ridiculous. It is precisely the sense of what she said ; every word of it almost was long impressed upon my mind. The mahouts and their families live with the elephants they attend, and talk to them as to reasonable beings, in reproof, in praise, in entreaty, in anger.

We expected to see the wild animal turn from the mangled remains of the husband to tear the wife and child asunder. We were agreeably disappointed. Malleer's rage was satiated, and he now felt remorse for what he had done. You could see it in his drooping ears and downcast head. He took his foot off the shapeless carcass. The wife threw herself upon it, and the elephant stood by respecting her grief. It was a touching spectacle. *The woman*

lamented loudly, turning now and then to the elephant to reproach him ; whilst he stood as if conscious of his fault, looking sadly at her. Once or twice the unconscious infant caught at his trunk and played with it. He had doubtless played with it often before ; for it is no uncommon thing to see the mahout's child playing between the fore-legs of the elephant, — it is no uncommon thing to see the elephant waving his trunk over it, allowing it to go a little distance, and then tenderly bringing it back again, as tenderly as a mother would.

In the mean time the spearmen were now advancing. They were mounted on active horses accustomed to the work. They came up on either side ; and gently touching the proboscis of the elephant with the ends of their spears, indicated thus what they wanted. Malleer flapped back his long ears, and looked threateningly at them. He might let his mahout's wife pacify him ; he was not to be led by them ; you could see the determination in his eye. They touched him again, this time a little more sharply. He threw up his trunk, sounded out a defiant threat, and charged full upon those on his left. They were off in an instant — their horses scampering away with all speed, whilst Mallcer pursued. The savage fury of the elephant was gradually returning ; and when the band which he had attacked had leaped a wall and were off out of sight, he turned upon the other. It was now their turn to fly, which

they did as nimbly as their companions, Malleer pursuing as fast as he could.

"Let the woman call him off," shouted the king ;
"he will attend to her."

She did so ; and Malleer came back, just as a spaniel would do at the call of his master.

"Let the woman mount with her child and take him away," was the king's order. It was communicated to her. The elephant knelt at her command. She mounted. Malleer gave her, first the mutilated carcass of her husband, and then her infant son. She sat upon his neck, in her husband's place, and led him quietly away. From that day she was his keeper, his mahout. He would have no other. When most excited, when most wild, *must* or not *must*, she had but to command, and he obeyed. The touch of her hand on his trunk was enough to calm his most violent outbursts of temper. She could lead him without fear or danger to herself ; and the authority which she had thus obtained, doubtless her son would possess after her.

And now that I have given so full an account of the destruction of one mahout, I will describe also the escape of another, whom we all regarded as doomed.

It was in the course of one of these fights, in a garden surrounded by a substantial iron fence, that the incident occurred. As usual, there had been prolonged pushing—a series of incessant pushes—

between the two antagonists. When the weaker had given way, he turned abruptly from his foe, and ran round the enclosure, pursued by the victor. The order was given to allow the fugitive to escape. As he left the enclosure, by some accident or other, his mahout fell on the inside. The pursuing elephant did not see him for a little ; but, as the monster stood near the only opening, it was impossible for the poor man to escape thereby. It was not long, however—only for a moment or two—that the man remained unobserved by the infuriated animal ; and the moment he was seen a chase began. It was impossible to succour him, for the whole affair was the work of a few seconds. At length the elephant came up with the unfortunate man. For their own mahouts the elephants may have some respect, but towards the mahouts of their antagonists they feel nothing but animosity.

The driver of the charging elephant did what he could to turn him from the pursuit of the man ; but his efforts were absolutely without avail.

The elephant had his trunk raised ready to attack or strike, when the poor fugitive stood cowering before him in a corner of the iron railing. The elephant thrust forward his head, and pushed with all his might. His tusks projected at each side of the corner in which the man stood, and with his huge head he stood pushing and shoving, with the same short forcible strokes he would have used had

he stood opposite to an opposing elephant. The man stood, however—protected by the iron railing against which the massive head of the monster shoved—stood untouched, pressing into the corner, making himself as thin as possible, with his arms stretched by his side.

To us, from a gallery above, it appeared that the poor mahout must have been crushed to death ; we could see only the massive back and voluminous haunches of the brawny monster, as he still shoved with trunk erect ; but we were mistaken. The man, finding himself unhurt in the corner, gradually slipped down into a sitting posture ; the elephant doubtless thinking (for he could not see him) that he was gradually annihilating the mahout as he felt him sink. Once seated, the man made his way adroitly between the fore-legs of the huge beast, and thus escaped into the arena. To our surprise we saw him issuing from the feet of the monster, in a stealthy sort of way, not a bone injured, not even a scratch upon his skin. In another moment the man was off, having escaped through the opening of the enclosure ; and before the attendants had brought fireworks and a match to drive off the elephant, the man, whom they must have expected to find a shapeless corpse, was safe and sound in their midst.

Strange to say, the most terrible *must* elephant, even when roused to fury by rage, may be thoroughly cowed and frightened by letting off fireworks in front

of him. A discharged rocket will arrest him in the midst of the most impetuous attack ; and he flies terrified from a fizzing Catherine-wheel or harmless collection of crackers. It may, therefore, be supposed that fireworks are always kept ready for explosion when danger is anticipated from the elephants, particularly in the season when they are most unmanageable, and most likely to do harm.



CHAPTER XII.

THE MOHURRIM.

The Sheahs and the Soonnies—Origin of the Mohurrim—The Emanbarra—The lament for Hassan and Hosein—The Dur-gah—Dhull-dhull—The wedding procession—The tomb—The burial-ground—The funeral rites—Contests at the grave.

It is a strange thing to witness the contrasts presented in the life of the Mussulman population of India at the different periods of the year. The month of Mohurrim—one of the Arabic months—is the anniversary of the death of two early leaders of “the faithful,” near relatives of Mohammed himself, Hassan and Hosein, and is observed by more than one-half of the Mohammedan population of India, including the court of Lucknow, as a period of deep humiliation and sorrowful remembrance. By more than one-half of the Mohammedan population, because, as every one knows now-a-days, “the faithful” are divided into two great sects, the Sheahs and the Soonnies, who feel towards each other, in a religious point of view, much as fanatical Protestants and Roman Catholics mutually do. The Turks are Soonnies, the Persians Sheahs—generally speaking, indeed, the western Mussulmans, from the Euphrates

to the Atlantic, are Soonnies ; the eastern, from the Euphrates to Java, are Sheahs.*

The Mohurrim, as the festival is called, scarcely ever passes over in India without contests between the two great parties,—between those who regard the deaths of Hassan and Hosein as barbarous murders on the one side, that is the Sheahs, and those who, on the other, look upon them as having been usurpers, and lawfully put to death by the true head of “the faithful”—the reigning caliph. These latter are the Soonnies.

On the first day of the Mohurrim, the vast Mohammedan population of Lucknow appears to be suddenly snatched away from all interests and employment in the affairs of earth. The streets are deserted, every one is shut up in his house, mourning with his family. On the second, again, the streets are crowded ; but with people in mourning attire, parading along the thoroughfares in funeral procession to the tombs set up here and there as tributes of respect to the memory of Hassan and Hosein. These tombs are representations of the mausoleum at Kerbela or Meshed,† on the banks of the Euphrates, in which the two chiefs were buried ; and are either contained in an Emanbarra belonging to a chief, or in the house of some wealthy Mussul-

* In Europe these sects are more frequently styled Sonnites and Shiites. The former are distinguished by white, the latter by red turbans.

† A town about sixty miles south-west of Bagdad.

man. The tomb-model, or *tazia*, belonging to the king of Oude, was made for his majesty's father in England; it was composed of green glass with gold mouldings, and was regarded as peculiarly holy.

The Emanbarra is usually erected for the purpose of celebrating the Mohurrim, and is not unfrequently intended, as was the king's, for the final resting-place of the heads of the family to which it belongs. The representation of the tomb of Hassan and Hosein is placed, at the period of Mohurrim, against the wall facing Mecca, under a canopy, which consisted, in the royal Emanbarra, of green velvet embroidered with gold. A pulpit is placed opposite, usually of the same material as the model, in which the reader of the service,—the officiating priest, as we should call him,—stands with his face to Mecca and his back to the tomb. This pulpit consists simply of a small raised platform, without railing or parapet of any kind, on which the reader sits or stands, as he may find most convenient.

Such is the collection of lustres and chandeliers accumulated on these occasions, the glare of the lights, the sparkling of the rich embroidery and gilding, the glittering of the bullioned fringes, cords, and tassels, ornamenting the banners with which the Emanbarra is hung, the turbaned and bearded figures, with their swarthy countenances expressive of deep-seated grief and humiliation,—that Mrs. Meer Hassan Ali might well observe she has “been

frequently reminded in such scenes of the visionary castles conjured up in the imagination by reading the *Arabian Nights' Entertainments*.* The emblems of Arabic royalty,—the embroidered turban, the sun-symbol, and the richly-decorated arms,—are always left at the base of the tomb, as evidences of the right of the two youthful martyrs to be considered the heads of “the faithful,”—a right denied by those atrocious heretics, the Soonnies.

During the entire period of the Mohurrim, large wax lights, red and green, are kept burning round the tomb, and mourning assemblies are held in the Emanbarra twice a day ; those in the evening being by far the most attractive, and the most generally attended. It was a fine thing to see the king, in his splendid mourning suit, and with a crown on his head decorated with feathers from the bird of paradise, taking his place in front of the reader,—his long train of native attendants coming in two by two afterwards, with downcast faces and sorrowing mien, whilst the wax candles and the brilliant chandeliers threw an intense light upon the scene. It was interesting to observe the profound quiet which reigned, until broken by the reader of the service,—some favourite Moluvie ; the audience always awaiting the commencement of the reading or the recitation in the same humble and sorrowing attitude in which they entered.

* *Observations on the Mussulmans of India*, vol. i. p. 35.

The lights are flaring upon the broad turbans ; the glittering interior of the Emanbarra, with its chandeliers and wax tapers, its gilding and its banners, its fringes and its embroideries, is a blaze of light. The preacher is reciting an account of the death of the two chiefs, his keen black eyes glowing with animation as he proceeds,—his audience, at first so solemn and so quietly sad, being gradually wound up to passionate bursts of grief. The orator groans aloud as he recapitulates the disastrous story ; his audience is deeply moved. Tears trickle from the eyes of more than one bearded face, sobs and groans issue from the others. At length, as if with a sudden unpremeditated burst, but really at the proper part of the service, the audience utters forth the names “ Hassan ! ” “ Hosein ! ” in succession, beating the breast the while in cadence. At first somewhat gently and in a low tone are the names uttered, but afterwards louder and more loud, until the whole Emanbarra rings again with the excited, prolonged, piercing wail. For fully ten minutes does this burst of grief continue,—the beating of the breast, the loud uttering of the names, the beating ever louder and more resounding, the utterance gradually increasing in shrillness and piercing energy ; until in a moment all is hushed again, and silence, as of deep affliction, falls like a pall upon the assembly.

But man requires refreshments after his labour.

whether that labour consist in being whirled across a frozen country with a biting east wind in one's teeth, at the rate of thirty miles an hour, or shouting "Hassan" and "Hosein" for ten minutes in uninterrupted succession, and beating the breast, with the thermometer at ninety. Sherbet is now handed round. The king and the members of his family indulge in that perfection of smoking—the hookah; whilst the others take a savoury stimulant from their belts and proceed to chew it, until the reading of the service recommences, and the time rolls round again for renewed thumping, renewed shouting of "Hassan" and "Hosein," and a renewed respite. At the conclusion, a funeral dirge is chaunted, called the *Moorseah*; and, being in the vernacular, this portion of the service is much prized by all, because comprehended by all. The *Moorseah* ended, the whole assembly rises, and recapitulates simultaneously the names of all the true leaders of "the faithful,"—the *Emaums*; ending with curses upon the usurping caliphs.

Such is the service performed daily and nightly at the Emanbarra during the Mohurrim; and in the observance of such religious festivals the king was very particular. He had made a vow in early life, as I have before mentioned, that, if ever he came to the throne, he would keep the Mohurrim for forty days, instead of ten, the usual number; and he kept his vow. He lived at such periods entirely with his

male Mohammedan relatives or attendants; drinking no wine, giving no dinners, and indulging in none of those luxuries of which he was so fond, and which were regarded as pre-eminently European. His wives had their own Emanbarra within the precincts of the palace, where a female reader went through the service; and I have been assured the beating of the breast, the shouting of "Hassan" and "Hosein," and the cursing of the caliphs is performed with still more energy in these female assemblies than in those of the males. The ladies reserved all their expressions of suffering and woe for the murdered emans at this time. "We must not indulge selfish sorrows when the Prophet's family alone has a right to our tears," was their reply to the inquisitive European lady,* who wished to know why they seemed, during the Mohurrim, to forget their lost children and their parents.

Nor is it only by their visits to the Emanbarra, and joining in the service, that the Sheah families express their sympathy with, and sorrow for, the sufferings of the lost chiefs. All kind of luxury is put aside during this month of Mohurrim. The commonest and hardest *charpoy*s, or a simple mat upon the floor, are substituted for the luxurious cushions and well-wadded mattresses on which they usually recline. Their fare is of the coarsest. Hot

* Mrs. Meer Hassan Ali.

curries and savoury pilaws are eschewed, and common barley-bread, rice, and boiled peas, are substituted. The usual ornaments are laid aside,—a great deprivation of the ladies' pleasures and comforts ; for the contemplation of her jewellery is one of the most pleasing and constant employments of the Indian belle.

In Lucknow they believe they have the metal crest of the banner of Hosein (conveyed thither long ago by a poor pilgrim from the west), and the relic is regarded as peculiarly sacred. The building in which it is contained is called the *Durgah* ; and thither the banners used in the Mohurrim are brought by thronging multitudes, with great display, upon the fifth day. The *Durgah* is fully five miles from the king's palace ; a magnificent building, in the centre of which the sacred crest is fixed aloft upon a pole, the whole elevated upon a platform hung round with flags and emblematical devices.

On the morning of the fifth day of Mohurrim, crowds of all ranks and classes of the people might be seen issuing from Lucknow to visit the *Durgah*, each little party bearing its own banners. On such occasions, the orientals love to display their wealth. The procession from the royal Emanbarra was, of course, the most magnificent. Six or eight elephants, with silver trappings, first appeared ; the men upon them bearing the banners to be blessed. A guard of soldiers accompanied the elephants. Then came a

sort of chief mourner, bearing a black pole supporting two swords hung from a reversed bow. Then came the king himself, and the male members of his family, with his favourite Moluvies. To these succeeded a charger, called Dhull-dhull, the name of the horse Hosein rode when he lost his life. A white Arab, of elegant proportions, was usually employed for this purpose, whose reddened legs and sides (from which arrows, apparently buried in his body, projected) indicated the sufferings of both horse and rider. A turban, in the Arabian style, and a bow and quiver of arrows, are fixed upon the saddle of Dhull-dhull ; and a beautifully-embroidered saddle-cloth contrasts finely with the spotless white coat of the animal,—the trappings all of solid gold. Attendants, gorgeously dressed, accompany the horse with chowries (for beating away flies) made of the yak's tail. Following Dhull-dhull might be seen troops of the king's servants, regiments of horse and foot, and a crowd of idlers.

The banners are borne through the Durgah, presented to the sacred crest, and touched, and then taken out again at the opposite door to make room for others. All day long does this ceremony continue. Fresh crowds constantly arrive from Lucknow, some waiting till the afternoon in expectation of an easier journey, some delayed by accident. Fifty thousand banners so hallowed in the course of the day I have heard of as being no extraordinary number.

From a burial to a wedding is often but a step in human life, and nowhere is that step shorter than in the East. The Mohurrim, a season of mourning and of grief—of woe, depression, and penance—contains also the representation of a wedding! This wedding is commemorated on the seventh day of the fast, the procession preceding it is called the *Mayndieh*. It is held in remembrance of the marriage of the favourite daughter of Hosein to her cousin Cossim, on the very day that Hosein lost his life at Kerbela. The *Mayndieh* is a great wedding-procession, which sets out at night;* that of the inferior being directed towards the Emanbarra of the superior,—that of the nawab, or native prime-minister, usually directing its course, for instance, to the Emanbarra of the king.

The Emanbarra on this day was fitted up, of course, with extraordinary splendour, worthily to receive the expensive and gorgeous *Mayndieh*; and when the preparations were complete, the public were admitted to gaze upon the glittering, although somewhat *bizarre*, scene. They crowded the vast hall in thousands; some admiring the strangely-varied collection of chandeliers, one of which alone, as I well remember, contained more than a hundred wax-lights; others gazing upon the coloured lamps,—

* The *Mayndieh* is the ordinary accompaniment of marriage in the East. It is referred to in the parable of the ten virgins.

amber, blue, and green ; others examining the glittering tomb of the emans, with its decorations, a huge lion on one side, and the royal arms, two fish *embowed and respecting each other* (as the heralds have it), upon the other. The streaming flags astonished the more lively ; and the silver representations of the gates of Mecca, of the tent of Hosein, and of the tombs of Kerbela, all placed upon silver tables, gave ample food for thought and calculations to the more sordid ; whilst the variety of arms and armour hung round the walls attracted the attention of the warriors. The whole of the decorations were rather showy and glittering than tasteful, exciting not so much admiration of the beauty of the scene as wonder at the display.

But the roll of musketry without has already announced that the wedding-procession is advancing—a wedding and a burial both performed in one day, and strangely commemorated together ; for Cossim was buried the day he was married. The roll of musketry has sounded, and the king's messengers come in, in great numbers, to clear the hall. They know their duty, and what is expected of them ; whilst the people, on their part, still linger around the objects of their contemplations. Hustling and friendly pushing will not do—the gazers have not yet feasted their eyes, and *will* not be hustled out. How London policemen would clear the place of the fierce-looking, well-bearded, and well-armed Mussul-

mans I do not know ; but the king's messengers and peons adopt a very summary method of procedure. They have three times announced with a loud voice that the place must be cleared ; and still hundreds are gathered round the tombs and round the silver models, and many gaping admirers still contemplate the dazzling lights. There is no time to be lost, and messengers and peons proceed forthwith to enforce the departure of the more tardy. Their bamboos are flourished, and well-thonged whips are produced. Blows resound upon the backs of the lagging gazers,—good sturdy blows often, by no means a joke,—and the recipients growl and move on. Not a loiterer, however, returns the salute—the messengers and the peons have right upon their side ; this whipping and flagellation is the *dustoor*, the custom, and therefore must be right. Occasionally a more than ordinarily severe stroke elicits a sudden facing round of the well-bearded *floggee* ; whilst the flogger still flourishes his cane or his whip, and looks the indignant sufferer full in the face. *Donkeys* and *dogs*, and even *pigs* (the most opprobrious of epithets to the ear of a Mussulman), they will call each other in irritated and rapid colloquy ; but still the loiterer moves on towards the door, however loudly or fiercely he may retort in words, rubbing the outraged part the while manfully, and wagging his beard violently in indignant remonstrance ; without any answering blow, however—

no angry retaliation comes from the hand or dagger. Custom has decided the matter, and custom and right are synonymous east of the Indus.

And now all is ready for the wedding procession, which has been gradually drawing near. The Emanbarra is silent again. The doors by which the people went out are closed, and the vast quadrangle in front, brilliantly lit up, is thrown open. The elephants and horses are left without; but the crowd of soldiers, and bearers of presents, and attendant musicians, almost fill up the spacious square—the beautifully tessellated pavement is completely hidden.

First, through the lines of soldiers, filing to the right and left, are borne in the wedding-presents. Richly-decorated attendants advance, carrying silver trays laden with sweetmeats and dried fruits, miniature beds of flowers, and garlands of sweet jasmine; whilst fireworks are let off as they enter the doors. A covered conveyance,—that of the bride,—the exterior of silver, such as is used by the highest of the female nobility, follows the wedding-presents, accompanied by richly-decorated attendants bearing torches. Then come the bands of music, with other torch-bearers; and amid glad sounds the whole procession enters, and makes the round of the vast hall. The presents are deposited near the model of the tomb, in readiness to be taken to the place of burial a few days after. But scarcely has the richly-

decorated wedding-procession passed into the Emarbarra, when another company, with downcast countenances and in mourning garb, draws nigh. The wedding and the death occurred on the same day, and so the funeral pomp follows hard upon the Mayndieh.

The model of the tomb of Cossim, duly supported on a bier, is brought in by the attendants, and a sad mourning procession accompanies it. Sometimes even a horse, duly trained for the purpose, accompanies the party. It is regarded as the horse of Cossim, and bears his embroidered turban, his scimitar, his bow and arrows; whilst over it is held a royal umbrella, the emblem of sovereignty, and a gorgeously-worked *aftadah*, or sun-symbol.* The horse, if he be admitted to the interior, is one, of course, upon which dependance can be placed; and makes the round of the spacious hall with a solemnity and steadiness of gait befitting the occasion.

So much for what goes on within, where the usual service succeeds to the processions. But there is a part of the ceremony proceeding without the courtyard, infinitely more to the taste of the populace than the gloom and distress which characterise the principal actors in the funeral scene. Without the

* An imitation of the sun, embroidered in gold upon crimson velvet; both sides alike; fixed upon a circular framework, which is borne aloft upon a gold or silver staff.

court-yard,—for that is a place which may not be desecrated by the great unwashed,—crowds have collected of all ages and of both sexes ; there is crushing and amusement, laughter and groaning and objurgation, as in all crowds. They are awaiting the distribution of coin, which always accompanies a wedding, and which is never omitted upon the occasion of the Mayndieh commemorating the marriage of Cossim and the daughter of Hosein. Small silver coins are scattered right and left by officers appointed for the purpose, with a lavish expenditure that would astonish the European. It is a part of the religion of the Mussulman to be liberal at such a time, and he cares not for the cost.

It is on record at Lucknow, that one of these Mohurrims cost a reigning nawab upwards of three hundred thousand pounds ; the costly nature of the processions and trappings—the munificence to the poor—the lavish display of expensive dresses and appointments, never used again, need not astonish us therefore. The wealth of the Mohammedan population of any part of India may be safely estimated by the displays they make at Mohurrim. Were all this valuable mourning and embroidery, this display of silvering and gilding, to be retained from year to year to be used at each successive Mohurrim, the expense would be very different. Such, however, is not the case ; what has once been used is not permitted to be used again. All is distributed

amongst the poor and needy on the conclusion of the fast ; so that the populace do not want incitement to make the commemoration of the Mohurrim as enthusiastic as possible.

But we have not yet ended with the season of gloom and despondency. All these services at the Emanbarras—all this consecration of banners, and parading of wedding and funeral processions, is but preliminary to a final display of a still more imposing character. The emauns lie dead—their deaths alone have been hitherto commemorated—that is, the deaths of Hassan and Hosein. Their funeral and the burial have yet to come ; for this funeral vast preparations have been made, whilst for the burial, an imitation of the burial-ground at Kerbela has been duly set apart by each family of large possessions ages before.

These burial-grounds are all at a considerable distance from the walls of the town ; and at the earliest dawn of day the populace issues forth in thousands, to witness or to take part in the various ceremonies which accompany the burial of the tomb-models, together with the food and other articles always put into a Mohammedan grave.

As the funeral of Hosein was a military spectacle, so, on this occasion, is every endeavour made to give as military a character as possible to the display. Banners are exhibited, bands play, matchlocks and guns and pistols are fired off, shields are clashed

together, and no sound is wanting which serves to bring before the mind's eye the mimicry of military pageants. The poor man, with his little company, falls into the rear of the rich man's larger assembly, that he may get on the faster thereby ; for the crowds are dense, and the smaller bands have no little difficulty in making a way for themselves. Besides, some of those heretical Soonnies may be lying in wait, to attack or to interrupt ; for they, miserable unbelievers ! regard the whole display as worse than foolish, as almost impious, in fact.

Each procession is marshalled much in the same order : first, the consecrated banners, carried aloft upon long poles, the bearers of the poles usually seated in an elephant-howdah. The larger displays will have two or three, or even six elephants so employed. A band of music, discoursing such dirges as their instruments will accomplish and custom prescribes, follows the elephants ; where all are playing, procession jostling procession, company pressing against company, each with its band, it may be easily imagined that the sounds produced are not of the most harmonious. The sword-bearer,—with the two glittering blades hung aloft upon a black pole and suspending beneath a reversed bow, near its summit,—comes after the band. He is supported by men on each side, who also bear aloft black poles, to which are attached streamers of long black unspun silk.

Then comes the horse—Dhull-dhull—as on the former occasion of the consecration of the banners, attended by numerous servants. Two grooms hold the bridle, one upon either side; an officer marches at his head with the sun-symbol; another holds over him a royal umbrella; others accompany him with gilt and silvered staves, whilst running messengers follow with small triangular green banners. The chain armour, gold-embroidered turban, sword and belt, are all fixed upon the saddle of Dhull-dhull; whilst often the owner of the animal, and head of the procession, walks after the horse as a sort of chief mourner. A walk of some miles amid such steaming crowds is by no means a pleasant journey.

The bearers of incense, in gold and silver censers, succeed. The censers are suspended by means of chains made of the same material, and are thus waved to and fro, as the march proceeds,—much as they are waved at the foot of the altar in Roman Catholic cathedrals on the continent. The *lahbaun*, a sweet-smelling resin, which is burnt in the censers, is probably the very frankincense so frequently mentioned in the Bible. The reader of the funeral service follows, usually attended by the proprietor of the tomb-model and his friends. Always barefooted, and often without any covering upon their heads, do these mourners follow in sad procession. It is not unusual thing to see their heads disfigured with chaff

and dust,—the more striking symbols of profound grief.

The tomb-model, or tazia, is borne next ; above which a canopy of green cloth or velvet, embroidered with gold or silver in the more showy processions, is spread, elevated upon poles, and carried by several men stationed at the side. The model of Cossim's tomb ; the covered conveyance of his bride ; the trays of wedding-presents, with all the other accompaniments of the marriage-procession, follow in order ; and lastly, camels and elephants, bearing representations of the tent-equipage and warlike train of Hosein, as he marched from Medina to Kerbela.

These are all the parts of the procession proper ; but, in addition to these, oriental charity always demands a train of elephants, the howdahs on which are filled with confidential servants distributing bread and money amongst the poor. The bread so distributed is believed by the Mussulman ladies to possess certain peculiar virtues of its own, very superior to those of the ordinary staff of life. They will commission their servants to bring them a morsel of such, even though they may themselves distribute, or cause to be distributed, large quantities ! Its being given on the great day of the Mohurrim constitutes it holy, sacred, and peculiar.

All along the march, as the various processions wind by different roads over the country, guns,

pistols, rifles, and matchlocks, are discharged; whilst the mourning cry, "Hassan! Hosein!" is heard at intervals swelling out from the mighty throng.

The ordinary ceremony of burial is gone through on the procession reaching the appointed place—the model of the burial-ground at Kerbela. The tomb-model, with its various accompaniments of wedding-trays and wedding presents—fruits, flowers, and incense—all are committed to the earth, a grave having been previously prepared for the purpose. It is at this part of the ceremony that the long pent-up animosity between the Sheahs and the Soonnies usually finds vent, and the mimic burial is often made the occasion of loss of life and bloody feuds between the contending factions.

It must be remembered, that this fast of the Mohurrim is quite distinct from the Ramazan. The Ramazan—a period of thirty days, during which all "the faithful" abstain from eating, drinking, and smoking, between sunrise and sunset—is observed by all classes of Mohammedans, by the Indian Mussulman on the banks of the Ganges, equally with the Fezzan on the shores of the Atlantic in Northern Africa. The Mohurrim, however, is peculiar to the Sheahs, and properly only extends over ten days. The devout commemorate it for forty, just as the zealots of both sects will fast during the month preceeding and that succeeding the Ramazan.

During such periods, as I have already remarked, we seldom saw the king in private. He held his morning durbar as usual, and we were in attendance ; but often even this would be intermitted, and all public business suspended for the time being. Did we require an audience of his majesty, to lay any matter of urgency before him, which was an unusual thing, we saw him when he was dressing,—in the hands of his European favourite, having his hair dressed.

On one occasion, in one of those mad freaks which despotic power and defective early training had made habitual with him, he attended the Emanbarra, during the Mohurrim, in his ordinary European dress, his black London hat in his hand. The act was regarded as a great scandal by the Mussulmans, and profound heads and long beards were shaken solemnly as the owners discoursed about it. We, the European members of the household, were just as ready to condemn such conduct, and to advise his majesty to adopt a different course, as his native counsellors ; but advice was thrown away,—counsel was lost upon him, unless it coincided with the whim of the moment. I am aware that in the residency we were regarded as the suggesters of all these mad freaks. The resident knew as well what went on in the palace on public occasions as we did ; but he could never know whether any such escapade was the result of the king's own caprice, or the suggestion of

the "favourites." He believed the latter ; and the *Calcutta Review*, as well as other Indian periodicals, have since most unjustly denounced us as the aiders and abettors of extravagances which we should have prevented if we could, and which we often condemned as heartily as our vilifiers.

CHAPTER XIII.

FAREWELL TO LUCKNOW.

The barber again—The king's uncles—His majesty's treatment of them—Cruelty—Indignation—Departure from the dinner-table—The barber goes to Calcutta—Virtuous resolutions of the king—The barber's return and triumph—Our dismissal.

THE circumstances which led to my departure from Lucknow, and not mine only, but that of another member of the household, higher in the king's esteem than ever I was, will not take long to tell. The influence of the barber was daily becoming greater. It was very perceptible that the hero of the curling-tongs was in fact the real ruler of Oude ; and even the attention of the resident was gradually being directed to the subject. No one could live in Lucknow, in fact, without being aware, that if any man wished to succeed at court he must first win the favour of the barber. Several causes conduced to this ascendancy. The low, depraved tastes which the king had contracted during years of unrestrained indulgence, and an almost boundless command of wealth, were just those which the barber found it his interest to foster and encourage. He made himself necessary to the king ; and he had the art, whilst he really led and suggested, always to appear to follow

and to be led. Every bottle of wine or beer consumed in the palace put something into his pocket; it was his interest, therefore, to prevent the king's reformation in respect of drunkenness. Every favoured slave, every dancing-girl who attracted the king's notice, paid tribute of his or her earnings into the open palm of the barber. Even the nawab, and the commander-in-chief of the king's forces, found it their interest to conciliate the reigning favourite with valuable presents. Can it be wondered at, then, that he fostered abuses by which he thrived, when his low sordid nature is taken into consideration?

To us of the king's household these abuses were apparent enough; and I believe we were all honestly anxious to correct them. The will was there, but the means were wanting; and though we consulted together on the subject, yet no feasible plan presented itself. One of the most influential took it upon him to remonstrate with the king upon his continual inebriety; and he swore, fumed, was calmed, promised amendment, and forgot his promise. By such means the hands of the barber were strengthened only, not at all weakened,—that was quite plain.

That a strong feeling of enmity prevailed between the king and his uncles, I have already had occasion to observe. He never forgave them for having conspired, together with his father, to prevent his gaining the musnud. When he invited any one of

them to his private dinners, it was usually that they might become intoxicated and be insulted. The facts I am about to relate may appear scarcely credible ; but they are literally true. Such scenes cannot fade from the memory ; and I shall describe them as they occurred.

One of these aged uncles was invited to the king's private table. He was well plied with wine, and forced unwillingly to drink far more than he could well stand. The barber saw that the king enjoyed the poor old man's distress at the condition into which he himself perceived he was fast falling.

" Let us have a Scotch reel," suggested the little hero of the comb and brush ; " and I will dance with Saadut." Saadut was the king's uncle.

His majesty was delighted. He seized at the idea forthwith. " Good, good!" he cried, as he pushed back his chair and prepared for the dance,— " good, good, let the khan dance with my dear uncle."

The whole room was forthwith in an uproar. The dancing-girls continued their performances at one end, whilst the king pretended to dance, as he watched the fiendish little barber and his uncle. The poor old man was helpless in the brawny arms of the favourite, and was whirled round and round until he could hardly stand. The king laughed until tears stood in his eyes. During an interval in the wild reel, the barber knocked off the turban of the old uncle. Amongst natives, the loss of the

turban is an indelible disgrace. Drunken as he was, the panting grey-headed old man was wroth at the insult, and felt for his dagger.

In an instant that too was seized by the barber, and taken from him before he could draw it ; then his belt, then his shawl-girdle, then his outer coat of cloth-of-gold. Article after article of clothing was torn from him. Two of us offered to protect the helpless old man. The king was furious at our interference.

"Stand back, gentlemen ; let the fun proceed, or, by heaven, I shall put you in arrest," shouted the half-drunken sovereign, still delighted with the performances of his favourite.

In a few minutes the grey-headed old man stood in the centre of the apartment divested of every particle of clothing—a laughing-stock to the king and his detestable minion and the attendant slaves. Water was thrown over him by the king's orders : he was struck, too ; not violently, but in jeering mockery, by his wild torturers. It was a pitiable sight to see him, covering his face with his hands, and shedding bitter tears, drunk though he was, at his disgrace.

"And we sat by to see all that done—sat by without interfering !" you exclaim naturally, good reader. We made the effort to interfere more than once, and were roughly ordered to desist ; nay, stout swordsmen were even ordered up into the apartment

to prevent our interference. At length we could stand it no longer, but indignantly took our leave, giving the king but scanty courtesy as we did so; nor was his majesty disposed to be over-courteous to us that night, for he resented our interference.

What went on after we left the apartment we heard subsequently. The king insisted upon the poor old man dancing as he then was, and the barber was his partner; whilst servants, male and female, of all grades, collected together to witness the humiliation of the king's uncle. The revel proceeded until Nussir felt too much the influence of the wine he had taken to continue it any longer. Then, and only then, was the persecuted man released.

In native states such as Oude the king is everything; his nearest relatives are of no more consequence or importance than the meanest of the people. A man who chances to please the king with a song, or a girl who captivates him with a dance, is more honoured and attended to than the king's brother or mother. Possessing absolute power of life and death, the sovereign must not be thwarted in his fits of merriment and cruelty, or it fares worse for the poor sufferers afterwards. What was intended as a short-lived jest, may become a long-continued source of suffering, if the anger of majesty is roused, particularly if roused by Europeans; for he cannot wreak his vengeance on the latter, and so it falls with

double force upon the poor native. When Buktawir Singh was ordered to be decapitated for his senseless witticism, as narrated in a previous chapter, his only fear was, that we of the European household should interfere in his behalf. "Had you done so," he subsequently remarked to me, "no power on earth could have saved my life."

Such, then, was the treatment of the king's uncle Saadut, on the occasion I have described. We were witnesses before that to a similar scene. The victim then, however, was a youthful dancing-girl, not a grey-headed old man ; and although she protested and exclaimed, nay, fought valiantly in her own defence, yet the barber, the agent and instigator in both cases, succeeded in making the king very merry at the plight to which he had reduced her. Her nominal husband was one of the singers in the room at the time,—for the nautch-girls are always accompanied by singers ; and the wretch, when he saw that the freak was pleasing to his majesty, lent his assistance to the barber. So complete is the demoralization of men who attend about the courts of absolute monarchs!

These instances were bad enough, and we showed the king that we regarded them as witless cruelties,—nay, that we were indignant at them ; but he cared little for our disapprobation or our indignation. What happened afterwards was worse.

Another of the uncles, Asoph by name, more infirm and aged than Saadut, was invited to join the

king's dinner-party. We assembled in an ante-room, waiting for the two *great* men of the court, the king and the barber. Asoph was with us; and taking me a little aside, he spoke softly, so as not to be overheard.

"What does the king want with me?" he asked.

"Only to dine with him, I believe," was my answer.

"Alas, am I not old? is not my hair grey, and my eye watery? I am not a companion for my nephew, who is young and fond of pleasure. It is a bad sign, boding nothing but evil, when he invites any of us."

There was a pathos in the old man's words, as he gave utterance to his complaint in musical Hindustani. I was touched with his sorrow.

"Do not fear," I replied; "the king entertained your son the other day, and treated him well."

"My son was not in Oude when Nussir's father died, nor when Ghazi-u-deen made us promise to oppose his son's elevation to the throne. Nussir has no spite against my son. Would to God he would let me live at home in peace and quietness! Has he not all Lucknow, and what it contains, to make him happy?"

The king approached, leaning upon the arm of his favourite, and saluted us right royally as he entered;

for there was a certain dignity about him. He fixed his keen black eyes upon Asoph and me, and drew near to us.

"Welcome, my uncle Asoph," said he, extending his hand; "we have missed you too long at our table."

"Your slave is honoured by your majesty's smile," said Asoph, timidly taking the proffered hand

"Let me lead you to the table myself, Asoph," said the king, as they walked off.

We followed. Everything was as usual. The king occupied his elevated armchair at the middle of one side of the table. We sat in our accustomed places to the right and left of him. Asoph was placed exactly opposite the king; no one else sitting upon that side. When the king invited any native to the table, he usually occupied the place in which Asoph now sat, facing his majesty.

A bottle of Madeira was opened, and placed beside Asoph. The soup was despatched, the fish came, the more substantial viands were brought. The king drank wine with Asoph; and the old man seemed reassured, and quaffed his wine with gusto, stroking his long wiry grey moustache, after his habit when pleased.

"You do not drink wine with my uncle," said the king to one of our little party, and then in succession to each of us. Asoph drank his glass of

wine at each challenge, and seemed to enjoy it. After the fourth or fifth replenishing, however, he put down his glass half-empty only. The king noticed it, and, looking his uncle full in the face, asked somewhat sternly,—

“Is not the wine good at my table?”

Asoph declared it was excellent, as he drank the portion he had left.

The dinner proceeded, and at length the dessert was placed upon the table; and with the dessert came the usual amusements—tumblers and the nautch-girls were those of that night. They were little attended to by the king, however; his eyes were fixed upon Asoph.

The bottle of Madeira which had been originally placed before him was now nearly empty.

“Do you not see that Asoph Nawab wants wine?” said the king, turning to the barber; “get him another bottle.”

A meaning look passed between the favourite and his master, as the former went to get a bottle for the old man. It was in vain that Asoph protested that he did not want any more, stroking down his moustache harder than ever; he was not comfortable then, and yet he was exhilarated with the wine he had taken.

There were plenty of servants about. The barber's going out to get a bottle convinced me that *some treachery* was intended. Subsequent inquiries

elicited the information that the bottle brought in for the doomed Asoph was half brandy, half Madeira. The servant, who had assisted the barber, himself confessed the fact to me.

The king gave various toasts,—“ his brother the king of England,” first ; “ his friend the governor-general of India” next,—and was in great vein. Asoph was forced to drink, and gradually lost all power of directing himself. He sat unsteadily in his armchair, his head now bowing to the right, now to the left, as he tried hard to keep his eyelids from falling. He was soon nearly blind drunk.

The king was delighted ; and turning in a pleasant way to his favourite, made some observation about the drooping head of the unfortunate old man

“ His moustache wants arranging now,” was the barber’s reply, as he half rose.

“ Go, good khan, and settle it ; chuck it into its place vigorously,” said the king, laughing.

The barber rose, and pulled the long moustache at either side ruthlessly, turning the head, as he did so, first one way, then the other. It was barbarous usage for any one, but particularly for an aged, infirm, grey-headed man. We exclaimed against it, two of us half rising from our chairs as we did so. The king turned upon us furiously. “ Leave your places at your peril !” he exclaimed ; “ is not the old pig my uncle ? I and the khan shall do with him as we please.”

It was useless to interfere,—worse than useless ; it might but bring down greater punishment upon the luckless old man. Asoph's head still moved unsteadily. He had opened his eyes widely, smarting with pain at the violent wrench given to his moustache ; but soon relapsed into his old nodding see-saw motion. Drunkenness had quite overpowered him. For a little the king seemed intent upon the performance of the tumblers and the dancing-girls, his brows still knit and his eyes angry. He had not forgotten our exclamations.

The old man's head, as it moved from side to side, obstructed the king's vision occasionally.

“ His head must be kept quiet, d—n him ! ” shouted the irritated sovereign.

The barber was on his feet in a moment. He procured a piece of strong fine twine, and with it he approached the drunken Asoph. Dividing the twine into two equal parts, he tied one end of each piece firmly in each moustache. We could not conceive what his object was. The king looked on delighted. The ingenuity of the thing pleased him. A man who had not been accustomed to wield the razor, the comb and brush, and the curling-tongs, would never have tied those pieces of cord so firmly in the long wiry hair. But what was to be done with the other ends ? We were not left long in doubt. The old man opened his eyes once or twice during the operation, and uttered inarticulate sounds. But the wind

and brandy he had taken were too powerful for him, and he speedily relapsed into unconsciousness.

We were not left long in doubt as to the intention of the barber. He tied the ends of the twine, one to each arm of the chair on which the old man sat,—tied them firmly, caring little to what inconvenience he put the king's uncle. The performances of the nautch-girls and the tumblers went on as before. They appeared to pay no attention to what passed at the table.

The king clapped his hands and laughed loudly at the ingenious device of his favourite. With each mustache tied firmly to an arm of the chair on which he sat, Asoph's head drooped in drunken lethargy upon his breast. The king whispered the favourite after a little. The little man rose and left the apartment. I felt convinced that some new cruelty was about being practised, and looked meaningly at my friend,—he who had introduced me into Nussir's service,—the most influential European at court, the barber always excepted. He saw my indignant glance, and understood it. For a moment he sat irresolute; and then rising, said calmly to the king,—

"I will release your majesty's uncle. This is disgraceful."

"Leave the room!" shouted the king, enraged beyond all bounds, swearing and stamping as he spoke; "leave the room, sir! Am I not master in my own house? in my own palace? Leave the

room ; and any other gentleman who is disposed to interfere between me and my uncle may accompany you."

I rose, bowed, and followed my friend. The idea of using force was ridiculous. We retreated together to the door of the apartment, and left the room. We heard subsequently what occurred after our departure. The barber reappeared with some fireworks just after we had left. The fireworks were let off under the old man's chair. The legs of the unfortunate uncle were intentionally scorched and burnt ; and he seized the arms of the chair with his hands, and started to his feet. Two locks of hair were torn from his upper lip as he did so, and a portion of the skin with them. The blood flowed freely from the wound, and the drunkenness of the sufferer disappeared. He left the room, thanking the king for his entertainment, and regretting that the bleeding of his nose prevented him from remaining. All this was dissimulation. He knew that he had been barbarously treated—knew it right well ; but he was too good a courtier to allow his indignation to appear.

The king laughed louder than ever ; but his European friends were silent. None laughed at all but the barber ; and then even he seemed alarmed at the result of his freak. There was little merriment at the royal table during the rest of that night, and the king retired early.

As for my friend and me, we had gone directly to

Constantia, the residence built by General Martine, and now appropriated to travellers as an eastern *serai*, where rooms are to be had by European travellers free of cost, but no attendance or food. We had gone there to secure apartments ; for we were living in the king's houses, and expected an order to vacate them and leave his service forthwith. No such order came, however.

The insults so frequently received at the king's hands had at length roused the active enmity of all his family. The retainers of his uncles and cousins became the terror of the king's servants. All Lucknow was in an uproar. The royal troops were beaten by the insurgents ; and the king demanded assistance of the resident ;—the Company's troops at the cantonments would soon reduce the rebels to order. The resident refused to allow of their being so employed, remonstrated with the king, and advised him to come to some accommodation with his relatives, offering himself to be the mediator.

After a week of utter confusion, all was arranged. The durbars were held as usual, and we resumed our stations in the household, our previous absence passing unnoticed.

It was not more than a fortnight after this, when the barber was sent by the king on a mission to Calcutta. I forget its immediate object, probably to procure new lustres, or chandeliers, or wine. The favourite's brother, a recent arrival in Lucknow,

was left behind, but had no influence. Now or never, thought we, is the time to overthrow the barber—now or never. My introducer to the court had been one of the most intimate and respected friends of the king ; and he was determined to make a vigorous effort, during the absence of the favourite, to prevent the king relapsing into his old habits on the barber's return. In many private conversations he represented forcibly the evil that was being done, as well to the reputation as to the health of his majesty himself, by his continual inebriety. The king listened to it all like a whipped schoolboy ; nay, even shed tears more than once.

" It is true—it is too true," he would exclaim, " I am a drunkard, a d—d drunkard ; and everybody knows it. But it's all the khan's doing. Wallah, but he does what he likes with me !"

After many such conversations, the king determined that, on the barber's return, he should be kept in his own station—that he should not again be permitted to join our party at dinner ; that, in fact, he was to be favourite no longer. This resolution was communicated to us all by the king himself ; and we congratulated him on it, assuring him that his own dignity, the honour of his kingdom, and, what he valued far more, his health, required this change.

" Gentlemen," said he, knowingly, " you don't know how firm I can be when I like. I'll show

the khan — fat pig that he is — that I am not going to be led by the nose any longer ; you shall see, you shall see—let us have a glass of claret now."

For a week after this resolution was formed we dined constantly at the royal party, and no one left the table in a state of intoxication. The court of Oude was becoming quite moral and respectable.

At length the news was brought to us one morning that the barber had arrived in Lucknow the preceding night. We were most anxious to know what would be the result. It was quite true ; the barber had arrived, and attended the king early that very morning. We attended the private durbar. The king's head was in the hands of the favourite. I thought I saw a sneer of triumph on the countenance of the little man as we entered. He saluted us cordially, however ; and we returned his salutation. The king asked him of Calcutta, of his purchases, of the governor-general, of the shipping, of the steamers ; and the barber answered with his wonted discretion.

" I fear the king will never keep his promise," said my friend, as we walked together towards our elephant to return home.

" If he does not, our days in Lucknow are numbered," was my reply.

" Yes," he answered, " it would be impossible to remain here, if things go on as they have been. No honest man could stand it."

It was decided between us that, if the barber took his usual place at the table that day, I should also take mine, to see the result, whilst my friend should refuse to join the party.

There was no doubt that evening in our mind that the barber had resumed all his former influence—no doubt whatever. We saw the king approach the ante-room, leaning on his arm as before. My friend left at once, and returned to his house on the other side of the Goomty.

We entered the dining-room as usual after the king. He affected not to have observed the absence of one of his principal courtiers until we were seated at the table.

“Where is our friend?” he asked.

“He has returned home, your majesty,” was my reply.

“Ha—has he so! Wallah, but that was badly done! Let him be sent for.”

A messenger was despatched across the river forthwith to my friend’s house in the park. The dinner proceeded—the barber occupying his usual place, and performing his usual duties.

The messenger returned.

“Where is he?” asked the king.

“The saheb sent his compliments and duty to the ‘refuge of the world,’” said the *hurkaru*, or messenger, “and begs to be excused.”

“By my father’s beard, but he shall not be ex-

cused ! Go back, you dog, and tell him he *must* come."

The messenger salaamed low, and departed again.

The more substantial viands gave place to curry and rice. The savoury dish was perfuming the room when the *hurkaru* again entered.

" Well ! " shouted the king in an angry voice ; for the messenger was salaaming instead of speaking.

" The saheb hopes that the ' asylum of the universe ' will not command him to come ; — the ' asylum of the universe,' says the saheb, knows why his slave cannot come." Such was the message.

The king struck his fork down violently upon the table. He always did so when vexed.

" Go back, go again," he exclaimed vehemently, " and tell the saheb I shall come myself and bring him here, if he does not come. He would not treat his own king so ; why does he me ? Go, go."

A third time the messenger departed. Dessert was on the table, and a puppet-show was endeavouring to delight the " asylum of the world " when he returned again. This time, however, the saheb heralded his own approach ; and the messenger contented himself with advancing to the threshold, as though he should say, There he is ; you see I have brought him.

" Come," said the king when he saw him, " come, my friend, sit down, and take a glass of wine with

me. Yah Hyder, but there has been trouble enough to bring you here ;” and the king pointed as he spoke to the vacant seat.

“ Your majesty must pardon me,” was the reply ; “ I told your majesty I should never sit down to table again with *that* man,” pointing to the barber, “ and I will not.”

“ Pooh, pooh ! nonsense, my friend. Sit down, sit down. Bring a bottle of champagne for us.”

But it was in vain that the king coaxed. The indignant Englishman was not to be wheedled, and replied firmly, again reminding the king of his promise.

“ Boppery bopp !” exclaimed the distressed sovereign, “ but what trouble you give me !” Here his majesty rose from his chair ; and ordering the barber and the captain of the guard to follow, he took the refractory courtier with him into an adjoining ante-room.

A long conversation was the result—criminating and recriminating on both sides. The barber threw himself upon the goodness of the king ; the refractory saheb took care to remind his majesty of his plighted word ; the captain tried to act as peacemaker. As to the king, he was perplexed, and said little or nothing. At length he proposed that they should all join him in the dining-room in tumbler-bumpers of champagne, and therein drown their quarrels. To this my friend would by no means consent ; and

the king then, feeling that he had exhausted all means of reconciliation, sighed, swore a little, threatened, took the barber's arm, and walked into the dining-room. The captain of the guard followed. The refractory courtier returned home.

"He is gone," said the king, looking round the room again.

"His place can be easily supplied," suggested the favourite.

"Let him go, d—n him; to be sure it can." And there it appeared as if the matter ended. But it was not to end there. My turn was to come next.

As the king's eye looked over his guests at his table, it rested upon me. I was watching him at the time. Our eyes met. He turned quickly from me, and, putting his hand towards a bottle, muttered something about a glass of wine. I filled my glass, and the king filled his. His hand was on it, his head was turned towards me again, but with a pleasant expression no longer. His eyes flashed angrily. I raised my glass, and was muttering as usual, "God bless your majesty,"—such was the etiquette. But before the sentence was uttered, the king pettishly pushed his glass from him, spilling the wine, whilst he thundered forth in an angry tone, "No sir, I will not drink wine with you. You are a friend of his."

"Your majesty was a friend of his but yesterday,"

was my reply, "and told him then how much you valued him."

"Do you hear him?" exclaimed the irritated despot; "do you hear him? Why does he dare to speak to me that way?"

"Your majesty is fond of Englishmen," I replied; "they speak their mind sometimes. But my presence is distasteful; I have delayed too long."

I arose as I spoke, and walked towards the door. I heard the king swearing and striking the table violently with his fork as I went out.

That very night my friend received an order to leave the king's house, in which he lived. The messengers were commanded to throw his property out of it if he delayed; but the nawab was not disposed to execute these orders harshly. He had a wholesome fear of Europeans; and his servants assisted in removing the various articles to Constantia, where apartments had already been taken for the discarded courtier and his family.

As for me, my removal was speedily accomplished. Unencumbered as I was by wife or family, I was not long in having everything I possessed removed. Before morning dawned, we were both lodged in Constantia, and had placed ourselves under the protection of the resident, who communicated with the nawab on the subject, reminding him that for any injury that befel us he should be held responsible.

We remained quietly together for a few days in Constantia. When our arrangements had all been made, we sailed down the Goomty to the Ganges, and were speedily on our way to Calcutta.

Such was the end of my experience of royal favour. A few words will suffice to complete the history as well of the barber as of the king.

During the visit to Calcutta, the particulars of which I have related above, it appears to have been the barber's intention to quit India altogether. He had large sums of money safely deposited in Company's stock, he was too knowing a man not to perceive that his position was altogether an uncertain one, and he had resolved to quit Lucknow for good, before the king's capricious favour was at an end. Doubtless, as a preparatory step, he had, some time before, sent for a brother from England, who of course informed him of all that took place in his absence. The reformation we had caused was matter of conversation as well in the residency as in the court. The favourite had probably hoped that his brother might succeed him as hair-dresser and park-ranger, but he had miscalculated either the king's powers of fickleness, or his brother's powers of pleasing.

Reinstated in his authority and favour, the barber ruled, on our departure, with a more despotic sway than ever. Unbridled license resumed its rule in the court. The scenes which occurred in the

palace were whispered over India. "All decency and propriety," says the *Calcutta Review*, "were banished from the court. Such was more than once the king's conduct at this period, that Colonel Lowe, the resident, refused to see him, or to transact business with his minions."

But amid all this riot and license, the king regretted our departure. He saw that the barber was making a tool of him, and inwardly chafed at his position. On more than one occasion he openly reproached the favourite for the loss of the only two friends who were capable of giving him good advice. The barber saw the approaching storm, and prepared for it. His brother did not succeed in winning the king's favour, and Nussir-u-deen at length saw that the intention was to surround him only by the creatures of his bad advisers. A European chief butler (*darogah of the kitchen* was his official title), had been added to the court, and this chief butler was the favourite's *protégé*. The two other European members of the household became mere nonentities in the palace—the barber, his brother, and the chief butler, were the sole possessors of power and influence.

At length things came to a climax. The resident was daily becoming more and more weary of the disorder which reigned in the court. His representations became stronger and more frequent. The king was waxing irritable and uneasy. Doubtless

there were not wanting natives in the harem who whispered into his majesty's ear words about the barber which they would not have dared to utter openly or loudly. "You have driven away the only good counsellors I had," at length, exclaimed the king to the favourite one day, in a fit of anger, "and now you think you can do what you like with me—you and your brother. But you will find yourselves mistaken, and that before long. The resident is quite right, you are the evil genius that has made the palace what it is."

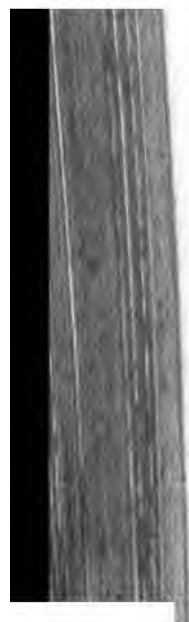
The barber became alarmed at this, and at some new and threatening arrangements, which seemed to have for their object the dispensing with some of the creatures whom he had appointed. He fled precipitately one night to Cawnpore. There he was within the Company's territories, and safe from the king's anger.* When Nussir-u-deen heard that the favourite had fled, he sent officers forthwith to his house, imprisoned his brother and his son, and confiscated all his property. The brother and the son would probably have been executed had it not been for the resident. As it was they remained in durance vile for ten days, until the king and his prime minister had made an end of confiscation. The property seized by them,

* The *Literary Gazette* of September 29th, 1855, in noticing this work, gives a different account of the barber's flight. The above, however, is from one who was in Lucknow at the time, and I have no doubt of its accuracy.

which nominally belonged to the barber, is stated to have been worth a lakh of rupees (£10,000).

The barber lost no time, of course, in proceeding to Calcutta, and thence to England, as soon as he was joined by his relatives. The fortune which he carried away with him cannot be accurately estimated ; but I have heard it stated that it was not less than twenty-four lakhs of rupees (£240,000). Arrived in England, he speculated largely, and for a time successfully. He was a merchant, a partner in a distillery, a stock-jobber. The railway mania gave the first check to his prosperity. He lost largely by speculations at that time. The distillery was the cause of still further losses ; and in 1854 he went through the Insolvent Court. His name is still in the London Directory, however, with " Esq., merchant," after it ; and he resides in one of the neatest and most fashionable of suburban retreats.

As for Nussir-u-deen Hyder, the refuge and asylum of the world, his sending away of the barber was the signing of his own death-warrant. His family gradually introduced their own servants into the palace ; and four months after the favourite's flight (in 1837) the king was poisoned. One of the uncles whom he had treated so badly, a cripple, succeeded him on the throne ; and the son of that uncle is the present king.



APPENDIX.

PRESENT STATE OF THINGS IN OUDE.

Kite-flying—The Nautch-girls—Fair of *Sungum*—Hawking—
State of the country—The Nauparah Ranee—Basket-loads of
heads—More of the Nauparah Ranee—*Fracas* in Lucknow—
Col. (now Gen.) Outram's arrival in Lucknow.

It may be supposed by some that the state of things described in the foregoing pages was one which could not last beyond a few years—that a country so governed must speedily come to ruin and utter destruction. The successor of Nussir-u-deen was, I believe, a better man and a more worthy sovereign than he; but if the Indian newspapers are to be credited, things are pretty much in the same state now as when I was in Lucknow. The same extravagances, the same total neglect of the country, the same depravity on the part of the royal agents, the same luxury and indifference in the palace, are to be found now as then. A few gaudy ceremonies, a few religious festivals annually, with immense displays of elephants, banners, rich liveries and such like, amuse the good people of Lucknow, and tend to keep them in order, if not in content; whilst the king confines himself to his amusements during the greater part of the year.

The following extracts from the letters of the Lucknow correspondents of the Calcutta press, particularly of the *Englishman* newspaper, will prove the truth of these remarks.

Writing on the 2nd of January of the present year

(1855), "Our Own Correspondent" thus describes the ordinary pastimes of the Oude nobility :—

"Among other recreations, the nawabs, and other affluent natives, as well as the inmates of their harems, are excessively attached to the childish amusement of flying kites, to while away an idle hour. Just a little before dusk, in the cool of the evening, thousands of these kites or *puttungs*, as they are termed here, may be seen floating in the air. Before it is fit for any service, the line, which is sometimes silk, but generally speaking, fine cotton, well twisted, thin and durable, is rubbed with boiled rice, mixed with levigated glass, and coloured with indigo or brick dust. This makes the cord so sharp as frequently to cut the fingers, and to prevent this it is necessary to wear gloves. The women in the zenanas, owing I suppose to their sedentary habits and hermit-like existence, display great predilection for this silly sport. Considerable wagers are laid, and at times heavy stakes lost; whoever cuts the cord of his adversary's kite being the winner, and he is immediately overwhelmed with flattery for the dexterity and skill with which he cut adrift his opponent's kite. The general method of passing their time is confined to such frivolous amusements as flying kites, playing on the *sitar*, a favourite instrument with all classes—repetition of amatory poems and extempore compositions in poetry on the fascinations of either their favourite begums or concubines. Should the evening not be devoted to the zenana, dancing-girls are summoned, who keep up to a late hour exhibiting their voluptuous graces. The nautch girls of Lucknow are celebrated for their sociability and education, the generality of them possessing a colloquial knowledge of Persian. They pre-eminently excel the nautch girls of Delhi by their exquisite singing as well as their beauty. The oils, and especially the utr (otto of roses), with which they besmear their persons, are anything but agreeable to Europeans."

Again on the 6th of January the same correspondent writes :—

"For the first time, after a continued indisposition of more than three months, which at one time excited apprehensions for his safety, the king drove out last evening, and may now be supposed to be completely recovered. His favourite resort for evening drives is the park of *Dil-kushar*, as being remote from the tumult and din of the city.

"This rural retreat was once a very popular drive with the European residents of Lucknow; but of late it has been shut to the public, the king on account of its seclusion having appropriated it to himself.

"The revenue accruing to the state from licensed punch shops and other houses of ill-fame, is calculated to be enormous. The annual grand fair of *Sungum* attracted thousands of the population of this great city. *Sungum* signifies the confluence of waters; a small stream, called the *Kookrait* or the Dog-river, from *kookoor*, a dog, concerning which an extraordinary legend prevails, that the water of the *Kookrait* is an immediate antidote for hydrophobia: this small stream joins the Goomty a little below the king's race-course.

"The festival of *Sungum* is purely a Hindu one, and the Mohammedan holiday-seekers visit the fair to witness the performances of the celebrated jugglers of Dabeepattun, whose legerdemain and gymnastic exhibitions are performed with incredible dexterity, and would even make the 'Wizard of the North' stare with astonishment. Besides the commonplace deceptions of changing chickens to eggs, and the stone of the mangoe into a growing tree, bearing ripe fruit, performed by itinerant jugglers in every part of India, I saw several surprising feats displayed. One in particular I very much admired as being most perilous, but which absolutely requires to be seen before due appreciation can be accorded: vaulting through a wooden frame, raised upwards of five feet from the ground, and from which are suspended swords, the edges being remarkably sharp; the space between the swords and the lower part of

preclude the passage of a man's body. With amazing agility, the performer *runs along* a piece of cloth, elevated two feet from the ground, supported by *tulwars*, and vaults through the small aperture in the frame, doubling himself up into a surprisingly small compass."

On another occasion, he describes the sport of hawking as practised by the prime minister :—

"This week has almost entirely been devoted by the minister to hawking,—a species of amusement passionately pursued by the higher class of natives. The plain facing the minister's palace at Ghow Ghat, is admirably adapted for this diversion : it forms a beautiful piece of level ground, about three miles in extent, with a few lakes interspersed in opposite directions, plentifully abounding with ducks and other water birds. This pastime affords, even to the spectators, much amusement, who, in breathless suspense, look on at the terrible struggle between the hawk and its prey. Now the graceful sparrow-hawk, the *accipiter fringillarius* of natural history, sailing majestically in the air, at one time describing circles, and anon remaining stationary, as if immoveable in the heavens, till by a signal from its well-known trainer, he pounces down from his airy height with surprising speed, darting at its prey like an arrow winged with unerring precision. The chase then becomes most exciting, the spectators straining their eyes not to lose sight of the struggle ; the escape of the pigeon is a circumstance of rare occurrence with trained hawks ; the bird soon returns triumphant, its talons encumbered with its victim, and perches, as if aware of its importance, upon the extended arm of the trainer. Nawab Ali Naki possesses some very valuable hawks and falcons, regularly trained, for the field. Whatever his public conduct may be, the private character of Nawab Ali Naki Khan Bahadoor, the premier of Oude, can hardly be censured. He is a man of a prepossessing exterior, and of some education and accomplishments : his demeanour towards Europeans is marked with great

politeness and condescension, and in more than one instance he has shown himself desirous of cultivating the friendship of his more enlightened brethren."

And now to turn from the sports and amusements of Lucknow to the condition of the miserable country of which it is the capital. The contrast is striking. I have made no change in the following, except in the substitution of English for the Hindustani words, in which the writer delights. The date is the 16th January, 1855.

"Intelligence has been conveyed from the Nauparah district, that the formidable Ranee of that province has been contending against Orr's corps with extraordinary vigour and success. The Government of Oude claims three years' revenue, which the Ranee on account of the heavy assessments made by the collector, *whose oppressions are notorious*, has not been able to liquidate. On information being received that a portion of the Ranee's troops lay encamped near a neighbouring village, two companies made a *détour* and surprised them: they attempted a slight resistance, but were speedily overcome. Among the prisoners that were taken was found the family of the notorious dacoit, Fuzul Ally, who commands the Ranee's forces, if a ragged band of undisciplined Rajpoots can be so dignified—Fuzul Ally himself narrowly escaped being captured.

"I will not again indulge in reporting the misgovernment of this wretched country, the irregularities and worse than supine indolence and apathy of those who disgrace the name of rulers; but this I say, that millions of the king's unfortunate subjects have drunk too deeply of the bitter cup of humiliation, which is now full, even to overflowing. I will only quote an emphatic clause of the treaty entered into between the king and the British Government. 'It is hereby provided that the king of Oude will take into his immediate and earnest consideration, in concert with the British resident, the best means of remedying the existing defects in the police and in the judicial and

revenue administration of his dominions ; and that if his majesty should neglect to attend to the advice and counsel of the British Government or its local representative, and if (which God forbid !) gross and systematic oppression, anarchy and misrule, should hereafter at any time prevail within the Oude dominions, such as seriously to endanger the public tranquillity, the British Government reserves to itself the right of appointing its own officers to the management of whatsoever portion of the Oude territory, either to a small or a great extent, in which such misrule as that above alluded to may have occurred, for so long a period as it may deem necessary.' ”

The *cool* way in which the manufacture of ice is brought in, in the following paragraph, after the statement respecting “ the basket-loads of heads ” (of poor wretches executed for real or imaginary offences), will be eminently suggestive to the English reader :—

“ The basket-loads of heads that are almost monthly brought in and suspended beneath the Abkarree Durwaza (the Custom-house Gate), are melancholy proofs of the sanguinary deeds of violence perpetrated in the districts. The weather having been very cloudy this month, it is apprehended that the supply of ice for the approaching hot season will be extremely scanty.”

Let us proceed, however, with the condition of the more remote districts. We heard something before of the Nauparah Ranee and her open defiance of the Government ; the news-writer continues respecting her ; he may not be grammatical, but his meaning is clear :—

“ The state of affairs in the districts are with rapid strides assuming a grave and menacing aspect. Accounts of hostilities and encounters between the Oude troops and the “ Feudal Barons ” are daily brought in, and the flame of war is without the least exaggeration kindled in every part of the king's dominions. Since I last wrote to you of the capture of Fazul Ally's family at Nauparah, another serious affray has occurred between Orr's corps and a band of marauders, who had sallied out of the fort on a pillaging expedition. Orr

himself headed the attack, and made a brilliant *coup de main*, inflicting a loss of sixty killed. The Ranee's troops stood their ground and made a determined resistance, keeping up a harassing matchlock fire from the outskirts of a dense jungle of *shakoo* and *dhaki* (thick brushwood), into which they retreat and find a safe asylum from any impending danger. Fuzul Ally, I hear, received a wound, which will for some time disable him from doing further mischief. Orr lost twelve men; and considering the vigorous and animated fight which ensued, his loss was extremely disproportionate. The Ranee, together with all her household, has sought refuge in the Nepaulese territory, where she has been securely residing for the last two years. Orr was invested with a *khilut* (dress of honour), for his services at Nauparah. But this affair at Nauparah sinks into comparative insignificance before the recent outbreak in the district of Seloun, where the prowess of the king's troops was rather severely tested, and their reputation for *invincible* valour found wanting. Mendee Hossein, the revenue collector of that district, has sent an urgent requisition for a reinforcement of troops, as the corps of irregulars under him have sustained a total repulse. The *casus belli* in this district is the same old story again, the non-payment of revenue. Being in blissful ignorance of the art of war, Mendee Hossein, the Chuklidar, after bombarding the refractory landholder's little mud fort for a couple of successive days, found too long a range for his guns of small calibre to execute any material damage, resolved to force the gate at which he had ineffectually been blazing away so long, as being the least protected. He consequently marched up with his irregulars, determined to extirpate the infidel rajpoots from the face of the earth; but he had scarcely approached within twenty yards of the gate when a destructive shower of balls put the irregulars, Chuklidar and all, into the greatest disorder, who, panic-struck, made a hasty retreat towards the camp. They were pursued and speedily

overtaken by the besieged Rajpoots, who killed or wounded upwards of ninety irregulars,—a disaster which might have been avoided, but for their disgraceful and pusillanimous flight. The minister has ordered the Chucklidar to be reinforced by twelve guns, and a regiment of 800 strong, under the command of Fedu Hossein, a native commandant of irregulars. What I have detailed above may be depended on as strictly true ; my source of information I believe to be unquestionable. *Nothing else* worthy of record stirring. The natives complain of the severity of the cold season ; this has been an unusually severe winter."

I have mentioned that affrays were by no means uncommon even in the streets of Lucknow, and that Nussir and his mother were once at open war with each other. In the following paragraph, the news-writer describes what he pleasantly calls a *fracas* between the retainers of two public officers, both servants of the king—a *fracas*, in which five people lost their lives ; of the number wounded he says nothing. Such a *fracas* in a European capital would cause some excitement—in Lucknow it forms a pleasant episode in the news-writers' weekly dispatch. The date is the 29th January of the present year :—

"The general topic of conversation (I mean amongst the natives) is regarding a serious affray, attended with melancholy results. But I must enter more into detail. Yesterday, in the afternoon, the armed retainers of Bussant Ally, a eunuch, who has recently emerged from the unenviable obscurity of a slave, to some influence, and a party of irregular infantry belonging to the *Coomastan* Abid Ally, fought in one of the public thoroughfares of the city. This *fracas*, which has caused considerable excitement, originated under circumstances extremely trivial. The eunuch it appears had purchased a tamarind-tree, the property of a washerman residing in the immediate vicinity of Abid Ally. Wishing to convert this umbrageous tree into fuel for his own domestic purposes,

the eunuch ordered it to be cut down. The tree was situated contiguous to the walls of Abid Ally's house, and afforded its inmates shelter from the scorching rays of the summer's sun ; and Abid Ally's nujeebs, therefore, not only considered it uncharitable, but oppressive, to be deprived of the friendly tamarind-tree. The servants prepared to execute their master's mission, and commenced hewing it down, but were unexpectedly compelled to cease by the retainers abruptly commanding them, in somewhat a less polite tone than "Woodman spare that tree," to desist. An altercation ensued, which resulted in the determination of Abid Ally's troops to protect it from the fury of the axe. This was followed by high words and a counter resolve to cut it down—high words were succeeded by blows. In Lucknow, swords are considered an indispensable appendage to the dress, and consequently universally worn—these were soon unsheathed, and a general contest commenced, which was hotly kept up for half an hour, by which time the police interfered and suppressed the tumult, not however before five persons paid the penalty of their indiscretion by being killed. The mob I am told surrounded the combatants by thousands, and with the greatest *nonchalance* looked on at the deadly strife."

The foregoing is bad enough, but the following, of the date of August 11th, is infinitely worse :—

"Oude has been the scene of a dreadful tragedy. At a place named Awad, about six miles from Fyzabad, there has been a fight between the Musulmans and the Hindus, arising out of some religious disputes. The former, who appear to have been both the aggressors and the assailants, were cut up almost to a man, but not before they had placed some ninety Hindus *hors de combat*. The sooner General Outram's report upon the state of Oude, upon which Lord Dalhousie is now employed, goes home, together with his lordship's minute, the better, for every day that the annexation of this misgoverned country is delayed, another day of suffering is added to the lot of ~~the~~

dreds, nay thousands, of one of the finest races of Hindostan."

"We understand that the 31st N.I. will not, as has been stated by some of our contemporaries, be relieved by the 19th N.I. from Lucknow, because the resident has objected to any reduction of the force at Lucknow. It is not at all improbable that he will be making a requisition for troops, as the quarrel between the Mussulmans and Hindus at Fyzabad is said to be assuming a most threatening aspect. Thousands are reported to have assembled for a stand-up fight, and if only a tenth of the number mentioned to us has been collected, the garrison of Lucknow and the king's forces combined would hardly suffice to put a stop to the fighting. A religious war between the fanatic Mussulmans and the bold Rajpoots of Oude would be a most fierce and bloody contest, and there is no guessing to what evil consequences it might not lead."

The *Times* Bombay correspondent asserts, that in this aggression the king upholds the Mussulmans, and is deaf to the remonstrances of the resident, no less than of his own prime-minister.

Lastly—to discover the parade and display still indulged in by this mimicry of a government—let us turn to the account of the reception of the new resident, Colonel (now General) Outram, by the authorities at Lucknow, in December last. :—

"On the morning of the 2nd December, Col. Outram, C.B., arrived at Cawnpore, and there he remained until the 4th. Soon after his arrival, he was waited upon by the high officers of state and confidential servants of the court of Lucknow, who were specially charged with the care of his majesty's kitchen, and all the supplies sufficient to prepare a magnificent repast for the resident. This compliment has been invariably paid by the kings of Oude to the representatives of the Company. On this occasion the provision was of the most sumptuous and costly character. This mission was confided to one of his majesty's principal physician.

Zubdool-ool-Hookma Syud Mirza Bahadoor, the Benjamin Brodie of Lucknow.

"On the 4th, Col. Outram left Cawnpore ; and on crossing the Ganges, found one of the king's state carriages, with four horses, waiting for him. The carriage was a mass of gilding and velvet, profusely emblazoned with gold lace. As Col. Outram took his seat, a salute fired from his majesty's artillery announced that the gallant soldier and accomplished statesman had entered the kingdom of Oude. Salutes were fired at intervals of ten miles, in order that all might know how far the resident had progressed."

The value of noise in the maintenance of dignity is evidently understood at Lucknow. Our court chronicler proceeds in his grandiose vein :—

"Col. Outram was accompanied by Mr. Power, of the civil service, assistant to the magistrate at Cawnpore ; and by Dr. Tressider, the civil surgeon. Eighteen miles from Lucknow, at a place called Bunnee, Col. Outram was met by Capt. Hayes, officiating resident, with whom were also Capt. Beatson and Dr. Fayer, of the Lucknow Residency. Capt. Hayes then took his place beside Col. Outram ; they were followed by Mr. Power, Capt. Beatson, &c. &c.

"The carriages were escorted by a detachment of irregular cavalry. The road was lined all the way to Lucknow by crowds anxious to catch a sight of the man to whom the destinies of Oude had been committed. On approaching the Char Bagh, a salute was fired by his majesty's artillery, announcing that the resident had nearly completed his journey. On these occasions it is the etiquette that the resident should not enter the city, but be driven as a guest to some one or other of the garden palaces belonging to the king. The Dhil-kushar Palace had been selected for his reception on this occasion. It is situated about two miles from the city, in the centre of an extensive park of magnificent timber, and is well stocked with deer. The palace was built by Saadut Ali Khan, and contains some fine rooms, elegantly designed, but miserably

furnished. There are, however, in it some portraits and pictures worth looking at; one, a full-length figure of Ghazi-u-deen Padshah (who died in 1827) in his robes of state, resting upon a sword, and surrounded by his courtiers; another represents Mohammed Ali Shah, the successor of Nussir-u-deen: he is represented seated on his throne, and encumbered by a profusion of jewellery and drapery; but as the painting is by a native of India, it were needless to criticise it too minutely. One of the bedrooms contains a picture of the once celebrated Mr. Paul, who wished to impeach the Marquis of Wellesley. He has a peculiarly sad, hang-dog look about him." Such is the court news-writer's opinion; how could he have any other, seeing that he wanted to impeach a marquis?

"In the dining-room there are two superb pictures, by Zoffani, of voluptuous-looking young women, displaying charms to which none but Moore or Anacreon could do justice. They are half-lengths, as large as life, looking more like life than most pictures, having the touch of Titian and the flesh of Etty."

Having thus exhibited his artistic taste, and critical acumen in the picture line, our chronicler proceeds:—

"On the colonel's arrival at Dhil-kushar, a royal salute from his majesty's horse-artillery proclaimed to all Lucknow that he had arrived; and there, surrounded by his staff and by the gentlemen who had accompanied him, with the wine of Bordeaux and the balmy incense of Number Twos, we will leave him to 'rosy dreams and slumber light,' recruiting for the fatigues and honours of the morrow." The "number twos" might be unintelligible to the English reader: I just step in here to inform him that it means No. 2 *Manilla cheroots*, the favourite cigars of the East.

On the 5th of December, the installation of the gallant general as resident is thus described:—"Long before sunrise, thousands upon thousands of the citizens of Lucknow were crowding the roads to the Dhil-kushar Palace, and clambering on the roof of every building whence a glimpse of the procession could be obtained.

A guard of honour, consisting of the flank companies of the 19th, 34th, and the 2nd Oude regiments, with the regimental colours, were drawn up at an early hour in the park to do honours to Colonel Outram, and to salute the heir-apparent. The troops had their proper complement of European officers, and were under the command of Major Troup, being accompanied by the splendid band of the 19th regiment. To the great grief of all his majesty's subjects, the king was unfortunately too ill to appear in person to welcome the gallant soldier. After a considerable delay, a royal salute announced that the heir-apparent, attended by the prime minister, and by all the principal nobleman and gentlemen of the court, had left the king's palace to meet Captain Hayes, the officiating resident. The delay originated in this way : according to ancient custom on these occasions, it has always been the rule for the king or the heir-apparent to meet the officiating or the assistant resident at a certain spot, not very far beyond the Bayley Guard, which is stationed at one of the residency gates. On this occasion an attempt was made to induce Captain Hayes to advance at least a mile beyond the prescribed spot ; and several native gentlemen galloped up, with the blindest of messages and kindest of compliments, begging Captain Hayes to move on and meet the heir-apparent. To all this Captain Hayes mildly replied, that he had no objection to remain out all day, but that not a foot would he advance beyond what he ought to do." A weighty matter, truly, on which our court newsman dilates at some length. It was settled, however, by time, as all questions must ultimately be, whether they involve the military preponderance of Russia in the Black Sea, or the advance of Captain Hayes nearly a mile,—no, not *nearly* a mile,—*at least* a mile further than "ancient" custom prescribed !

"Presently the magnificent *cortège* of the heir-apparent was seen advancing to meet the gallant captain. The parties advanced, shook hands, dis-

coursed of the weather, &c., and then the united procession reformed, and moved on towards Dhil-kushar.

"Let the reader imagine a procession of more than three hundred elephants and camels, caparisoned and decorated with all that 'barbaric pomp' could lavish, and Asiatic splendour shower down ;—with all the princes and nobles of the kingdom blazing with jewels, sparkling with gems, gorgeous in apparel, with footmen and horsemen in splendid liveries, swarming on all sides ; pennons and banners dancing in the sun's rays, and a perfect forest of gold and silver sticks, spears, and other insignia of imperial and royal state.

"Slowly and stately the procession wound its way until it entered the royal park of Dhil-kushar. The heir-apparent was supported on the right by Captain Hayes, and on the left by Brigadier Hoggan. As the procession approached the centre of the park, Colonel Outram's carriage moved forward to meet the heir-apparent. At the spot previously determined on, the two processions met, and nothing could exceed the beauty and splendour of the *coup-d'œil* at this moment. As Colonel Outram and the heir-apparent met and shook hands, the guard of honour under Major Troup presented arms, the horse-artillery of his majesty thundered forth a royal salute, and, amidst the solemn strains of the National Anthem, the clang of trumpets, and the rattle of drums from his majesty's cavalry and infantry, Colonel Outram took his seat in the *howdah* of the heir-apparent, and at his highness's right hand. The gorgeous procession then retraced its steps, at a slow stately pace, towards the city." Here follows a description of the colonel's "dark hair and moustaches," his "falcon eyes," his "diplomatic costume" (whatever that may mean), his "decorations," &c. &c.

"As the procession left the Dhil-kushar and entered the city, nothing appeared but a sea of heads towering one above the other, from the street to the verandahs, from the verandahs to the roofs, all dressed out in gala costume, and all enjoying the splendid scene. According to a good old rule, the heir-apparent presented the colonel

with a bag containing 1,200 rupees (equal to £120 sterling), for distribution amongst the crowds of beggars and *vauriens* who vociferously shouted, with stentorian lungs, for *buksheesh*, *buksheesh* (largesse, largesse). The gallant officer handed over the coins to Captain Hayes, who was on his right, and who rained down silver as the procession moved onwards. The scramble which ensued led to a series of stand-up fights, right and left, and to a running fire of entreaties, prayers, and whines from the beggars, combined with no end of swearing from the grain-sellers and cloth-merchants, into whose huts the coins fell by accident, all of which were stormed forthwith, just as the Highlanders did the heights at Alma; whilst one vigorous effort to reach the summit of a thatched roof terminated in its rapid disappearance, to the grief of the inhabitants,—three goats, a couple of old women, and a pugnacious jackass, which luckless animal resented the intrusion from above by hearty kicks, and soon cleared a circle round him. The procession, on reaching the king's present residence, turned off towards the right, and wended its way through an extensive garden by an excellent road with lamp-posts on either side, which leads to the Shah Mungul, an elegant and spacious palace, by the margin of the Goomty's blue waters. The Shah Mungul is situated in a lovely garden, where the citron, the lemon, and the orange, mingle with the rose and pomegranate in endless profusion. Fountains and statues enliven and adorn the garden; and gold and silver fish flash like molten gold and liquid silver in pools of the clearest water. At this palace a sumptuous repast was prepared," &c. &c.

There is no need to follow our pleasant news-writer to the repast. I have quoted sufficient to prove that the people of Lucknow are still amused with processions and military parade, whilst the provinces of Oude are left a prey to anarchy and confusion.

I have purposely drawn these illustrations from the events of the last few months, in order that it may not be objected that things are altogether different now in

Oude from what they were twenty years ago. In many parts of India there has unquestionably been a marked improvement within that period ; but such is not the case in Oude. There, everything remains as it was ; no worse, perhaps—for it could not be much worse—but certainly not better.

Of the interior of the palace the news-writers of the Indian papers probably know nothing ; but could we lift the veil from the palace of to-day, as I have partially lifted it in the foregoing chapters from the palace of twenty years ago, I have no doubt we should find therein the same vices and the same frivolities—the same mixture of narrow-minded caprice, unbridled license, fitful generosity, and unmitigated selfishness.



THE END.

